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goal! Weekly

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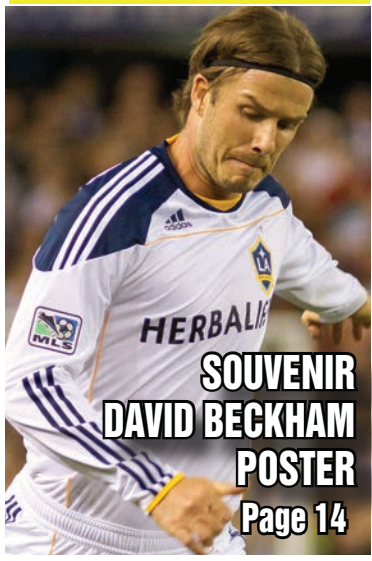
A-League Round 10 Friday 9th Dec - Sunday 11th Dec 2011

PHOTO: ANITA MILAS

GOLDEN BALLS SIGNS OFF WITH VICTORY

TATTS ALL FOLKS!

This Week's Line Up



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LA out-shoots Victory in friendly fire

Melbourne Victory 2

LA Galaxy 2

Match Details

Melbourne Victory 2
(16 Carlos Hernandez 16, 19 Isaka Cernak 37')
Los Angeles Galaxy 2 (Robbie Keane 40', 50')

Date: 6 December 2011
Venue: Etihad Stadium
Referee: Strebre Delovski
Assistant referees: Shaun Evans and George Lackrinidis
Fourth official: Lucien Lvaerdure.
Attendance: 34,608.

Melbourne Victory:
21 Ante Covic (Lawrence Thomas 46'), 2 Matthew Foschini (27 Paulo Retre 69'), 8 Grant Brebner (17 James Jeggo 58'), 10 Archie Thompson (9 Jean Carlos Solorzano 46'), 12 Rodrigo Vargas, 13 Diogo Ferreira, 15 Tom Pondeljak, 16 Carlos Hernandez (11 Marcelo Rojas 46'), 18 Daniel Allsopp, 19 Isaka Cernak (25 Luke O'Dea 76'), 23 Adrian Leijer (4 Petar Franjic 46').

Yellow cards: Petar Franjic 59'.

Los Angeles Galaxy:
12 Josh Saunders, 2 Todd Dunivant (15 Dan Keat 83'), 5 Sean Franklin (7 Jovan Kirovski 65'), 8 Chris Birchall (26 Michael Stephens 46'), 10 Landon Donovan, 14 Robbie Keane (32 Jack McBean 85'), 17 Adam Cristman, 18 Mike Magee (29 Dasan Robinson 46'), 20 A J Dela Garza, 23 David Beckham (3 Gregg Berhalter 89'), 27 Bryan Jordan (30 Paolo Cardozo 46').

Yellow cards: None

By Roy Hay

Friendly tour matches, even with a sponsor's trophy, are always more about entertaining occasional fans than satisfying the true believers and so it was when the Los Angeles Galaxy came to town on Tuesday night.

After 90 mins, Galaxy had pegged back Melbourne Victory's two-nil lead thanks to two of the softest penalties, both converted by Irish star Robbie Keane.

So they had a penalty shoot-out at the end, and again Victory gained and then lost a two-goal lead, eventually going down by four goals to three.

In the early stages of the first half Galaxy players were feeling the effects of two games in humid conditions in Indonesis and the Phillipines.

Both had been won by six goals to one and in the second match every starting player was replaced within the 90 minutes but both coach Bruce Arena and superstar David Beckham said the players were feeling tired.

So Victory had the better of the first phase of the game with Grant Brebner, a former colleague of Beckham at Manchester United, pulling the strings in midfield and Isaka Cernak relishing the lack of severe physical pressure to play his best game in Victory colours.

In the 14th minute, Beckham found himself in the clear just inside his own half and tried to chip Ante Covic with a replica of the goal he scored for Manchester United against Neil Sullivan in the Wimbledon goal in 1996.

This time the shot just drifted wide at the last minute with the keeper caught well off his line.

Victory went ahead in 16 minutes when Carlos Hernandez latched on the rebound from a blocked shot by Cernak. The Costa Rican's own effort was also stopped but he put the loose ball away at the second attempt.

Adam Cristman had a chance to equalize from a trademark Beckham cross but directed his header wide of the post.

In 37 minutes Grant Brebner found Hernandez in space and he slotted the ball between two defenders for Cernak to squeeze it through the legs of Galaxy keeper Josh Saunders.

Three minutes later Galaxy got the first of two penalty kicks Chris Birchall's shot hit the arm of Victory defender Matthew Foschini.

Robbie Keane stopped in his run up and should have been made to retake his successful penalty kick.

Archie Thompson released Danny Allsopp just on the stroke of half-time, but the striker put the ball over the bar.

Both teams made a swag of changes at half-time and continued to replace players through the second period, so the match lost focus and Galaxy had much more of the play.

Five minutes after the break Petar Franjic was adjudged to have brought down Beckham, but the initial contact seemed to be slight and outside the penalty area.

Nevertheless a spot kick it was and Keane repeated his success with the first, and in the same fashion.

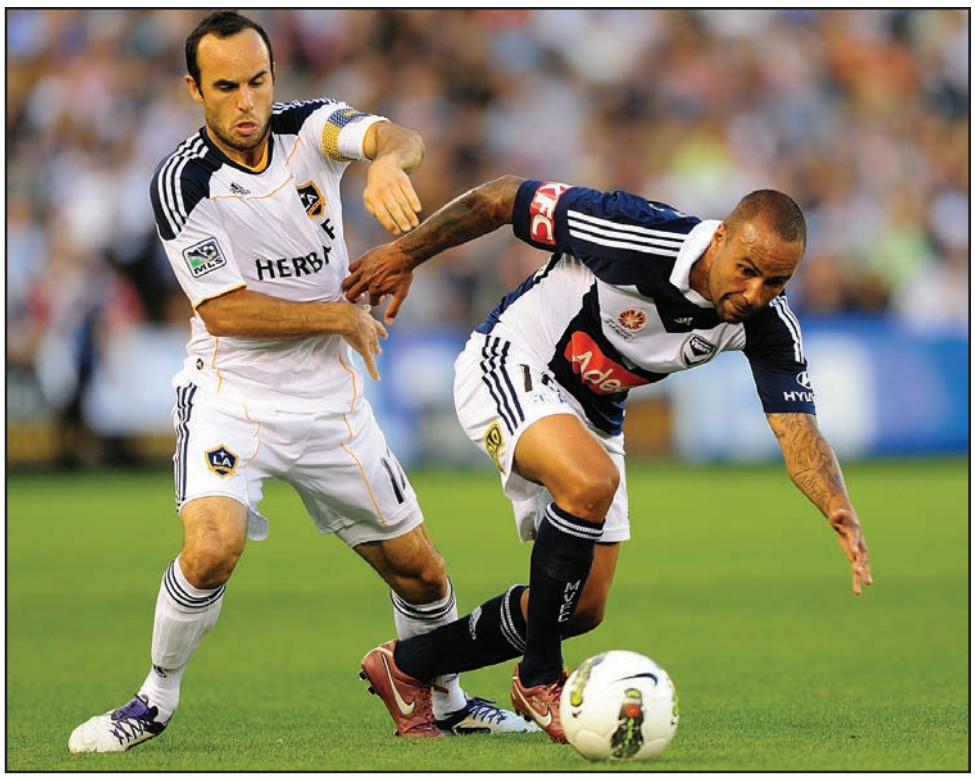
Both sides had chances in the later part of the game, but eventually the crowd got tired of the lack of action and the continual change of personnel and indulged themselves with a series of Mexican waves which continued until Beckham limped off after tweaking the hamstring which he injured in the final Galaxy match which gave them the Major League title.

Beckham got the deserved ovation when he left the field.

In the penalty shoot out, Rodrigo Vargas, Jimmy Jeggo and Tom Ponderljak scored for Victory, but Paolo Retre and Marko Rojas missed.

Landon Donovan missed the first for Galaxy but Hector Jiminez, Gregg Berhalter, Michael Stephens and Paolo Cardozo all scored.

The lower level seats were brought forward at Etihad and the crowd of 34,608 was very reasonable given the ticket prices for the match.



LA Galaxy's Landon Donovan and Melbourne Victory's Archie Thompson tangle on Tuesday night. Photo: DANIEL FLIS

David Beckham receives the Man of the Match award. Photo: DANIEL FLIS

Coming to terms with celebrity

By Roy Hay

The David Beckham show that is Los Angeles Galaxy rolled into Etihad Stadium this week eclipsing the brief flickering of another celebrity footballer who had his moment earlier this year, Harry Kewell.

The two footballers could hardly be more different in terms of their embrace of the status they have acquired as commodities in a world of celebrity stardom and intolerable hype.

Beckham faces many times more scrutiny than Kewell and is a much bigger star in the global arena, yet he is comfortable in the role, brilliantly well adjusted and despite a manufactured attempt to pretend that he is stupid, intelligent, sensible and grounded.

Last night he handled all his media commitments with aplomb, humour and openness, including the post-match press conference, after playing all but three minutes of the match carrying a hamstring strain incurred in the championship game for his club to end their regular season prior to this tour.

Kewell by contrast nearly always appears uncomfortable in media and celebrity functions and talks incessantly about only feeling free to be himself on the football pitch.

The levels of rewards the two players receive for their efforts are very different, a clear order of magnitude exists between their incomes.

Beckham moves effortlessly between environments, continues to perform, trains like a beast, and switches to the public role with aplomb.

It is tempting to look into their different backgrounds to find the answers to these contrasting responses to their celebrity.

Beckham grew up in London, the son of lower middle class parents, who supported but did not push him.

He idolised Manchester United and got the chance to join the club as part of a golden generation which had stellar success in their first full season in the senior team, demolishing Liverpool legend and football pundit Alan Hansen's forecast, 'You will never win anything with kids.'

He went on to win the European Champions League with United, then fell out with Sir Alex Ferguson and moved to Real Madrid and won La Liga with them before going to Galaxy for five years on a £25 million contract.

He played for England in the World Cup and European championships.

Kewell grew up in Sydney, the son of English lower middle class parents, who supported but did not push him.

He represented New South Wales in the national championships at Under-15 in 1994 and soon afterwards went to Leeds United on trial where he was offered a contract which he was able to accept through his English parentage.

He represented Australia at youth level, made his breakthrough into the Leeds senior team in 1996 and was fast-tracked into the Australian national team in April that year against Chile.

A move to Liverpool then followed and it included a start and a winner's medal in a European Champions League final against AC Milan in 2005.

He represented Australia at the World Cup in Germany and South Africa.

Both are photogenic and can be fashion plates when the mood takes them.

Both Kewell and Beckham married celebrity performers—Sheree Murphy, who played Tricia Dingle on Emmerdale on United Kingdom television, and Victoria Adams better known as 'Posh Spice' respectively.

The Kewells have three children, the Beckhams have four.

Though the levels might be different, the careers have a lot in common and both have had a long time to come to terms with their status and circumstances.

Both had serious low points and consequent vilification in their careers.

Beckham was pilloried for being sent off for kicking an Argentinian player during the World Cup in France in 1998 in a match which England eventually lost on penalties.

Kewell was believed to be malingering at Liverpool and was booed by the fans when he limped off in the European Cup final.

He had a long series of injuries in his career and some linked these were linked in the popular mind to picking and choosing which matches he played for the Socceroos over a long period.

You get the sense that Kewell is much less secure in himself, than Beckham and has been for a long period seen as dependent on his manager Bernie Mandic, while Team Beckham has always been dominated by the principal himself.

Kewell recently parted company with Mandic, which may be an indication of increasing maturity.

Kewell makes noises about putting back into the game when he finishes playing, while Beckham has already done so on a significant scale with academies in London and other places where disadvantaged children can follow their dream.

Did Kewell dodge the column by failing to appear in the match against Galaxy or was he so determined to be fit for the critical A-League match against Adelaide United at the weekend that he did not want to risk injury? Or was he sure his star would be eclipsed if he went head-to head with Beckham? It would have been a match to savour, but it did not happen.

As it happened Kewell did appear to be interviewed at half-time during the match saying that he was fit and keen to play.

The implication being that his coach Mehmet Durakovic, with his career potentially on the line, decided to hold him back for the Adelaide game.

While this is understandable from a Victory perspective, short changing the fans who paid up to $170.00 for a seat is very cynical.

How many of them were seduced by the pre-match Beckham versus Kewell hype?

Asia awaits for Aussies

Brisbane Roar have received a relatively kind draw for their inaugural AFC Champions League campaign in 2012, drawing the runners-up from the K-League and Chinese Super League as well as the yet-to-be determined winner of Japan's Emperor's Cup.

Roar, the 2010-11 Hyundai A-League champions and favourites to defend their title, come up against Beijing Guaon, which features Johnny Warren Medallist Joel Griffiths, as well as Ulsan Hyundai, who finished second in the Korean league this year.

It is Beijing's fourth attempt at the tournament, having progressed from a group including Melbourne Victory in 2010, their last appearance. Ulsan will be making their third appearance having not qualified in the past two campaigns.

Their third rival will not be determined until the Emperor's Cup is decided on New Year's Day.

Central Coast Mariners, who qualified as the second placed team in last year's Hyundai A-League, have a tougher assignment against Korean FA Cup champions Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma, who feature Socceroos defender Sasa Ognenovski, Josh Kennedy's 2010 J-League runners-up Nagoya Grampus and Chinese FA Cup winners Tianjin Teda.

Seongnam won the Champions League in 2010, while Tianjin are making their fourth appearance and Nagoya their third.

The Mariners are the least experienced team in the group in terms of ACL.

Adelaide United, the third-placed A-League side from last season, were gifted a place in the main group stage when Chinese club Liaoning Whowin withdrew and they received a favourable draw.

Brisbane Roar will be flying the Aussie flag in Asia along with the Mariners and Adelaide United. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

While they will face Gamba Osaka, the team who thrashed them in the 2008 Champions League final, and Bunyodkor, the Uzbek side who they defeated at the semi-finals stage three years ago, they also get the winner of the playoff between third-placed K-League outfit Pohang Steelers and the Thai FA Cup champions.

Gamba Osaka finished third in the J-League this year, while Bunyodkor won the 2011 Uzbek League by eight points.

Roar coach Ange Postecoglou said he was excited to have drawn clubs from three of the most competitive leagues in the Asian Football Confederation.

"It's exciting , that's the main thing," Postecoglou said.

"We're in it, we're in an important international competition and that's what we want as a club."

"You want to play against the big clubs and big countries to really test yourself."

"We've got a team from Japan, China and Korea which are all strong football countries with strong club football sides."

Mariners coach Graham Arnold was positive about his team's chances.

"Obviously the teams we play will be difficult, but if you look at where they are located the travel aspect has become a bit easier for us," Arnold said.

"Tianjin is close to Beijing, as is Seongnam to Seoul and Nagoya to both Osaka and Tokyo."

"With the A-League starting later and the final rounds of the competition overlapping with the ACL we hope the dates of the games will be nice to us," he said.

AFC Groups

Group A
Al Rayyan (QAT)
Al Jazira (UAE)
Nasaf (UZB)
Playoff West: winner 1 or 2 (TBC)

Group B
Al Ittihad (KSA)
Al Arabi (QAT)
Baniyas (UAE)
Pakhtakor (UZB)

Group C
Sepahan (IRN)
Al Ahli (KSA)
Lekhwiya (QAT)
Al Nasr (UAE)

Group D
ACL Playoff West: winner 1 or 2 (TBC)
Piroozi (IRN)
Al Hilal (KSA)
Al Gharafa (QAT)

Group E
Gamba Osaka (JPN)
Adelaide United
Bunyodkor (UZB)
ACL Playoff East: winner 1 or 2 (TBC)

Group F
Ulsan Hyundai (KOR)
Emperor's Cup winner (JPN)
Brisbane Roar (AUS)
Beijing Guoan (CHN)

Group G
Tianjin Teda (CHN)
Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma (KOR)
Nagoya Grampus (JPN)
Central Coast Mariners (AUS)

Group H
League champions (THA)
Guangzhou Evergrande (CHN)
Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors (KOR)
Kashiwa Reysol (JPN)

Playoffs
East Zone: Pohang Steelers (KOR) v FA Cup winners (THA)
West Zone Rd 1: Esteghlal (IRN) v Zob Ahan (IRN)
Rd 2: Al Shabab (UAE) v Neftchi (UZB)
Rd 1: Winner (TBC) v Al Ettifaq (KSA)

Georgies Press Box Burnt Down

Visitor's to Chaplin Reserve were shocked upon their arrival at the ground last Thursday night to see the charred remains of the Press Box, that was burned down on Wednesday night.

The fire brigade was forced to cut open the front gate in a bid to get to the fire that was well alight by the time they arrived. Club officials were notified of the fire in the middle of the night, but there was little they could do. Police were also at the scene investigating and taking finger prints and trying to find what caused the fire.

The press box was empty at the time of the fire with the exception of the Public address system. The area around the charred press box has been roped off, as further investigations continue. The biggest concern for club officials is the loss of electricity to the ground.

The usual Thursday night family meals were still able to go ahead, with the club hiring a generator to provide sufficient light for patrons. The club is working hard to have the lights re-connected to the premises by Friday the latest. The press box was built around 1983.

The charred remains of the Sunshine George Cross press box.

HAL Owners Congregate at Forum

All 10 Hyundai A-League clubs have discussed the outlook for the competition ahead of a new broadcast agreement at an Owners Forum in Melbourne on Wednesday.

The three-hour forum, chaired by FFA Deputy Chairman and Hyundai A-League Committee Chairman Brian Schwartz AM, covered a wide range of issues including:

- Financial sustainability
- Broadcast rights environment
- Smith Review
- Strategic decision-making affecting the Hyundai A-League

FFA CEO Ben Buckley said the forum was a robust and constructive exchange of ideas and views between the governing body and the club owners.

"A key priority identified by the Owners Forum is the need to develop a model that allows a club to operate with a balanced budget that relieves owners from the need to fund deficits," said Mr Buckley.

"Football needs to live within its means and address the growing pains being experienced after rapid expansion of FFA's activities since 2004, particularly in regards to the national competition.

"Our top priority is reducing then eliminating the operating deficits incurred by most Hyundai A-League clubs and we believe we have a model that will create the environment for clubs to reach that target of sustainability."

Crowds are up by 44% this season. Many flocking to glimpse the GW Angels in action...

The Owners Forum was briefed on the recommendations of the Smith Review into Australian football.

"In line with the Smith recommendations, the FFA Board and management will collaborate with the A-League clubs to improve the formal structured opportunities for Owners to contribute to decision making," said Mr Buckley.

The Owners Forum also discussed the establishment of working groups on stadium arrangements and community engagement.

In relation to the new broadcast rights agreement, due to commence no later than June 2013, the Owners Forum was briefed on the latest talks and the increasingly positive environment for football content rights.

"The big upswing in Hyundai A-League match attendances, TV viewership, club memberships and digital audiences shows there are millions of Australians who are passionate and engaged with football," said Mr Buckley.

"There is no better way to show the value of our broadcast rights than with the current numbers."

The Hyundai A-League has been buoyed by the following average increases for the 2011/12 season including:

- Crowds up by 44%
- Memberships increased by 17%
- TV audiences increased by 62%
- The Hyundai A-League's digital presence and engagement up 9%
- Merchandise sales up 10%

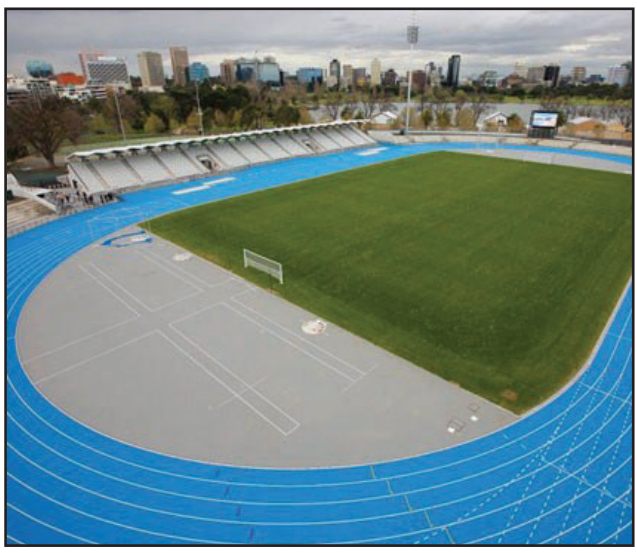
New Lakeside Opens

South Melbourne FC will host NSW Premier League Champions Sydney Olympic in an exhibition match on Sunday 11th December as part of the festivities to launch the refurbished Lakeside Stadium.

This will be the first football match played at the ground since renovations commenced in 2010.

Fans are encouraged to arrive early on Sunday to watch all junior levels of the Club playing in mini-matches across the Lakeside Stadium pitch and to take the opportunity to stroll around the stadium and observe the new facilities.

The Senior Mens match between South Melbourne FC and Sydney Olympic will kick-off at 5.30pm. **Entry is free.**



South Melbourne play Sydney Olympic on Sunday to kick off a new era at Lakeside Stadium.

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SCOREBOARD

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Brisbane Roar	9	6	2	1	22	7	15	20
2 Central Coast Mariners	9	5	2	2	15	8	7	17
3 Sydney FC	9	4	2	3	12	11	1	14
4 Newcastle Jets	9	4	1	4	11	13	-2	13
5 Perth Glory	9	4	1	4	9	12	-3	13
6 Melbourne Heart	9	3	3	3	12	11	1	12
7 Melbourne Victory	9	2	5	2	10	11	-1	11
8 Wellington Phoenix	9	2	3	4	9	10	-1	9
9 Adelaide United	9	2	3	4	7	17	-10	9
10 Gold Coast United	9	1	2	6	11	18	-7	5

THIS WEEK

Week 10	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
Fri 9 Dec 2011	Brisbane Roar v Melbourne Heart	Suncorp Stadium	7:00pm	8:00pm
Sat 10 Dec 2011	Wellington Phoenix v Perth Glory	Westpac Stadium	5:00pm	3:00pm
Sat 10 Dec 2011	Central Coast Mariners v Newcastle Jets	Bluetongue Stadium	5:30pm	5:30pm
Sat 10 Dec 2011	Melb Victory v Adelaide United	Etihad Stadium	7:45pm	7:45pm
Sun 11 Dec2011	Gold Coast United v Sydney FC	Skilled Park	4.00pm	5.00pm

NEXT WEEK

Week 11	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
Fri 16 Dec 2011	Adelaide United v Gold Coast United	Hindmarsh Stadium	7:30pm	8:00pm
Sat 17 Dec 2011	Newcastle Jets v Sydney FC	Ausgrid Stadium	5:30pm	5:30pm
Sat 17 Dec 2011	Brisbane Roar v Central Coast Mariners	Suncorp Stadium	6:45pm	7:45pm
Sat 17 Dec 2011	Perth Glory v Melbourne Heart	nib Stadium	7:00pm	10:00pm
Sun 18 Dec 2011	Melbourne Victory v Wellington Phoenix	AAMI Park	5:00pm	5:00pm

ROUND 09 RESULTS

Adelaide United 0
Central Coast Mariners 4
(Musti Amini 30', Bernie Ibini 32', Patrick Zwaanswijk 38' (pen), Rostyn Griffiths 66')

Perth Glory 2
(Mile Sterjovski 20' (pen), Shane Smeltz 54' (pen))
Gold Coast United 0

Newcastle Jets 3
(Ryan Griffiths 27' (pen)/88', Labinot Haliti 47')
Melbourne Victory 1
(Carlos Hernandez 20')

Melbourne Heart 1
(Mate Dugandzic 41')
Wellington Phoenix 0

Sydney FC 2
(Dimitri Petratos 1', Brett Emerton 19')
Brisbane Roar 0

TOP GOAL SCORERS

9 - Besart Berisha (Roar)

5 - Ryan Griffiths (Jets), Shane Smeltz (Glory), Carlos Hernandez (Victory)

4 - James Brown (GCUFC)
Nick Carle (SFC)
Jeremy Brock (Jets)
Mate Dugandzic (Heart)
Henrique (Roar)
Patrick Zwaanswijk (Mariners)

Ryan Griffiths scored a brace for the Jets and jumps back up the scoring charts.

The Smith report and the future of football

By Roy Hay

After seven months of deliberation the Chair of the Australian Sports Commission and former Liberal Sports Minister, Warwick Smith, has handed in his review of the Football Federation of Australia (FFA) and its custodianship of the world game. The review was instituted by the Federal Government because of its concerns about the sustainability of the code, the level of public support provided and the costs associated with the forthcoming Asian championships for national teams, the Asian Cup, which will be held in Australia in 2015. Smith's report contains a mixture of insights into the problems facing the game and a series of recommendations for its future development. It has some broad strategic vision and some very curious blindspots.

The Fury couldn't win enough fans quick enough to avoid costing the FFA big bucks..

Smith notes that football has the highest level of participation of any of the team sports and that the code is drawing new recruits so rapidly that keeping up with demand is a huge problem for clubs and local authorities. He points to the successes of the national teams at senior level, with both the Socceroos and Matildas shooting up the FIFA rankings. He reports that it looks like the A-League has turned around the decline in numbers of supporters in the last few years and that the failed World Cup bid was technically sound. But he stresses that financial stability must be the singular and immediate priority for the FFA to reduce reliance on government support.

Smith recommends that the A-League clubs should develop stronger links with their grassroots and local communities, while the FFA should give club owners a formal, structured opportunity to contribute to the strategic decision making for the League. Player payments should be reduced and current arrangements with stadia reformed. Clubs should aim for a broader ownership. The FFA should reduce its own administrative costs, while the government should not make changes to broadcasting rules which might inhibit the FFA in gaining the best possible media rights deal in the next round which is due in 2012.

Smith quite rightly notes that the FFA has received $122 million in recent years to assist with the finance of operations, carrying out high performance and participation programs and its failed World Cup bid. What he fails to do is to put this in any comparative context. The Australian Football League's new stadium at Carrara on the Gold Coast cost $120 million, of which the AFL put up $10 million with the balance coming from Federal, State and local governments. So one stadium received almost as much public funding as the FFA for all its activities.

Smith notes that the A-League, the flagship domestic competition lost more than $20 million in 2009–10 and that 40 per cent of FFA's total revenue, including government support, went to the League. Instead of a budgeted profit in the last financial year the FFA made a loss, largely as a result of emergency finance to clubs during ownership transitions and the collapse of North Queensland Fury.

Yet there are indications of how the A-League in particular might become viable. Brisbane Roar won the league last year playing what is generally regarded as the best and most consistent football seen in Australia by a club side. They did so with no marquee overseas players or Australian marquee players and with the lowest overall player payment of any club. Even so, the club's owners had to give up the A-League licence at the end of the season and were subsequently replaced. Looked at in isolation that is a poor reward for the financial stringency and on-field performance, but given the circumstances in Queensland last year, when Suncorp Stadium was under water at one period and the floods had a big impact on people's incomes and discretionary spending, it becomes more understandable.

FFA's key objective according to the report is to make the FFA independently sustainable by 2015. Given that it has to finance the national teams, the A-League and the Asian Cup this is a very big ask. Club matches against Asian teams in Australia have not resonated with the Australian supporters in recent times. Melbourne Victory drew 26,000 to its first two matches in the Asian Champions League but since then the average has been around 5–6,000. If the Asian Cup is to attract the sorts of figures for attendances and media audiences being bandied around by pundits, then promotion of Asian interactions have to begin now. Perhaps Brisbane can show the way when it takes part in the Asian Champions League later this year.

The Smith report is an important and worthwhile document and some of its advice to the FFA will need to be taken to heart and not just have lip service paid to it. It should not be used by outsiders as a stick to beat football for its continuing problems simply because it has failed to compare the levels of public support obtained by this game with that provided to other codes.

PFA responds to Smith report

Professional Football Australia (PFA) Chief Executive Brendan Schwab welcomed the release by the Commonwealth Government of "Building Australia's Football Community" by the Hon. Warwick Smith AM whilst expressing disappointment that the Review made a fundamental error in relation to player payments.

"The Review comes at a vital time for the game and we are pleased to see a series of recommendations that will encourage the Australian government to continue to invest in the game to secure its viability in the lead up to the 2015 AFC Asian Cup and beyond," Schwab said.

"The Review acknowledges the centrality of the A-League and the opportunity for it to continue to grow, especially through greater strategic integration between FFA and the A-League clubs, community engagement, better stadia deals and preserving the exclusion of the Socceroos FIFA World Cup qualifiers from the anti-siphoning list to assist FFA in the next round of broadcast rights negotiations in 2013.

"These are issues long advocated by the PFA, including in our thoroughly researched reform document of 2003 – "For the Fans" – which argued that a strong and viable national competition can be built in Australia premised on "5 pillars":

1. Quality on the field
2. Atmosphere through boutique stadia for 10,000 to 15,000 average crowds
3. Community engagement
4. The building of the club brands
5. Visibility, through effective marketing and the exploitation of the game's broadcast rights by packaging Socceroos and national league properties."

Schwab however noted that the Review had made a fundamental error on the issue of player payments when it recommended: "At a minimum, the salary cap must be frozen, but it would be appropriate to explore options to reduce the cap".

The Review refers to the report conducted by Braham Dabscheck on behalf of the Australian Athletes' Alliance (of which the PFA is a member) and finds that the A-League players' share of revenue of 46% is unsustainable in comparison with cricket (26%), NRL (22%), AFL (20%) and Rugby Union (20%).

"In calling for continued integration between FFA and the A-League through a single administrative structure, the game's integrated and responsible approach to player payments must be respected," Schwab said.

"As the Socceroos take home between 6.8% and 10.12% of the revenue they generate, the overall share of Socceroos and A-League player payments of combined FFA and A-League revenue ranges between 21.36% and 29.34%. This is consistent with the benchmarks referred to by referred to by Mr Smith and sees A-League players join Major League Soccer players as the only player groups that have voluntarily agreed to cap their earnings.

"The PFA has concluded long-term Collective Bargaining Agreements with FFA for both the Socceroos and the A-League in keeping with these principles. As recently as August, FFA and the PFA agreed to maintain the current salary cap regime for the 2011/12 and 2012/13 A-League seasons, with a CPI increase to apply on 1 May 2012.

"As the next A-League CBA will be negotiated when the new broadcast rights agreement is in place, it is clearly premature to suggest what player payments should be in that environment.

"Given the positive messages in the Review, it would be regrettable if they were subsumed by what appears to have been an unfortunate focus on freezing or even reducing A-League player payments based on an error in the Review concerning the players' share of football revenue in Australia.

"A reduction in player payments is exactly the wrong direction for the professional game in Australia. Stepping down this path would prevent the achievement by FFA of its strategy to make Australia a top ten football nation by 2015.

"Instead, now is the time for the game to focus on building the game's revenue streams especially through greater conversion of the millions of football fans and participants into fans of the Socceroos and A-League clubs," Schwab concluded.

SFC take wind out of Roar's record

Sydney FC 2

Brisbane Roar 0

Match Details

Sydney FC 2 (Petratos 1', Emerton 19')
Brisbane Roar 0
At WIN Jubilee Oval, Kogarah
Referee: Peter Green
Crowd: 11,555

Sydney FC: 1. Liam Reddy, 3. Jamie Coyne, 4. Pascal Bosschaart, 5. Michael Beauchamp, 7. Brett Emerton, 8. Karol Kisel, 9. Bruno Cazarine (18. Juho Makela 66'), 10. Nick Carle (23. Rhyan Grant 82'), 11. Dimitri Petratos (2. Sebastian Ryall 88'), 12. Shannon Cole, 15. Terry McFlynn.

Substitutes (not used): 20. Ivan Necevski (gk).

Yellow cards: Bruno Cazarine (42'), Karol Kisel (63'), Juho Makela (76')
Red cards: Nil

Brisbane Roar: 1. Michael Theoklitos, 2-. Matt Smith, 3. Shane Stefanutto, 4. Matt Jurman, 5. Ivan Franjic, 6. Erik Paartalu, 7. Besart Berisha, 8. Massimo Murdocca (18. Luke Brattan 62'), 10. Henrique (16. Mohamed Adnan 83'), 11. Issey Nakajima-Farran (21. James Meyer 59')

Substitutes (not used): 30. Matt Acton (gk).

Yellow cards: Nil
Red cards: Nil

By Mike Salter

It had to come to an end eventually, and at WIN Stadium in Kogarah on Sunday afternoon, it did. Brisbane's extraordinary unbeaten run was ended by a motivated Sydney FC, who scored two early goals and showed admirable poise thereafter to secure the three points.

The game began with a shock. After winning a free kick near the halfway line, Sydney's Pascal Bosschaart opted for a quick release along the ground. Bruno Cazarine dummied smartly and the ball reached Dimitri Petratos, who had worked his way in front of his defender. Although his first touch took him away from goal, Petratos managed to fire in a superb right-footed cross-shot which left Michael Theoklitos with no chance. 1-0 to the hosts in the opening minute.

Sydney maintained their initiative in the subsequent minutes, their pressing game disrupting Brisbane's rhythm and forcing the defending champions into a number of errors. There were few chances, however, and Brisbane gradually began to get their typical passing game going. Just as the momentum appeared to be shifting, along came Sydney's second.

A half-chance for Karol Kisel resulted in two successive corners, both of which were taken by Brett Emerton from the left. The second of these swung in viciously with the prevailing southerly wind, and Theoklitos, under pressure from Nick Carle, found himself in trouble. Flapping helplessly, he was left red-faced as the ball struck the crossbar and then his head before creeping over the line.

With Sydney's backline keeping a stern watch on Brisbane's two wide men, Issey Nakajima-Farran and the Brazilian Henrique, opportunities were at a premium for the visitors, although Mitch Nichols did manage a shot on 24 minutes, which skidded wide of Liam Reddy's far post. At the other end, Carle just lost a race to the ball with Theoklitos after some classy interplay in the Sydney midfield.

The prolific Besart Berisha barely touched the ball in the opening half, but he nearly got on the scoresheet when Nakajima-Farran, released cleverly by Ivan Franjic, whipped the ball across to him on 42 minutes. The Albanian striker lunged for the ball, and missed by inches. There was time for a chance for Petratos at the other end before the first half came to an end.

Brisbane enjoyed their best spell of the game in the opening fifteen minutes of the second period, but this time they were unable to make their territorial dominance count, with Sydney still impressively resolute in defence. Nakajima-Farran and Berisha combined again on 49 minutes to force a sharp save from Reddy, but otherwise Sydney FC withstood the pressure calmly.

Just before the hour mark the hosts spurned a good chance to make it three, when Petratos found himself free in the inside-right channel. Shooting wide, he was rewarded with a look of dismay from Bruno Cazarine, who had positioned himself ideally in the centre.

Brisbane made two changes in an attempt to increase the pressure, but it was Sydney who regained control of the contest after the hour. There was little goalmouth action until the 77th minute, when Emerton's right-wing cutback to Kisel saw the Slovakian midfielder blaze the ball over the bar.

Brisbane never looked like hauling back the two-goal deficit, as Sydney maintained their composure. A mistake from substitute defender Mohammed Adnan allowed Sydney's Juho Makela, on for Cazarine, a shot at goal on 86 minutes which Theoklitos did well to block. As did Shannon Cole, at the other end, putting his body on the line to smother a powerful volley from Franjic in the very last minute. A key win for Sydney FC and an end to one of the most impressive unbeaten runs in Australian football history.

Roar keeper Michael Theoklitos tries in vain to keep Brett Emerton's wind assisted corner kick out of the net. Photo: GEOFF JONES

Match Stats

2	Saves	1
3	Attempts on target	2
2	Attempts off target	3
41%	Possession	59%
7	Corners	1
7	Offsides	2
13	Fouls committed	7

All good things must come to an end and the Roar taste defeat for the first time in 37 matches.

Young gun Dimitri Petratos proves a handful for the otherwise resolute Roar defence. Photo: GEOFF JONES

Sydney FC sense a huge scalp is for the taking and are ecstatic after taking an early lead through Dimitri Petratos. Photo: GEOFF JONES

Relief for Heart in Morwell

Melbourne Heart

HEART

1

Wellington Phoenix

0

Match Details

Melbourne Heart 1 (Mate Dugandzic)
Wellington Phoenix 0
Venue: Morwell Sports Complex
Crowd: 2, 951

Melbourne Heart
1. Clint Bolton (GK), 2. Michael Marrone, 3. Brendan Hamill, 5. Fred (C), 6. Matthew Thompson, 7. Rutger Worm (9. Maycon 81'), 13. Jonatan Germano, 16. Aziz Behich, 19. Eli Babalj (17. Jason Hoffman 66'), 23. Mate Dugandzic, 25. Adrian Madaschi (18. Curtis Good 89')

Substitutes Not Used:
30. Sebastian Mattei (GK)
Goals: Dugandzic 41'
Yellow Cards: Madaschi 71'

Wellington Phoenix:
2. Manny Muscat, 3. Tony Lochhead, 6. Tim Brown, 7. Leo Bertos, 8. Paul Ifill, 9. Chris Greenacre (21. Dani Sanchez 66'), 12. Nick Ward (14. Mirjan Pavlovic 60'), 17. Vince Lia, 18. Ben Sigmund, 22. Andrew Durante (C), 20. Tony Warner (GK)

Substitutes Not Used:
1. Mark Paston (GK), 11. Daniel

By Joe Gallagher

A first-half Mate Dugandzic strike has defeated Wellington Phoenix 1-0 on Sunday at Latrobe City Stadium. However Wellington Phoenix was unlucky to hit the post twice.

Morwell of Country Victoria hosted Melbourne Heart and Wellington Phoenix at Latrobe City Stadium on Sunday- The former home of Gippsland Falcons who had current A-League players Archie Thompson, Eugene Galekovic and John Hutchinson on their books.

Melbourne Heart made three changes from their controversial defeat to Central Coast. Maycon, Curtis Good and the suspended Wayne Srhoj made way. Aziz Behich and Mate Dugandzic returned from Olyroos duties with Eli Babalj started instead of Maycon in attack. Jason Hoffman too returns to the bench.

Wellington Phoenix went unchanged from their defeat of Sydney FC. However Dani Sanchez comes onto the bench for Alex Smith.

It was the visitors who created the first chance on 4 minutes with Paul Ifill who shot with his left foot on the half-volley, but Clint Bolton who was in his 446th national league game saved well.

English forward Chris Greenacre was next to test Bolton but his left footed strike was scuffed and saved easily.

On 19 minutes Heart created their first chance after a mistake from Ben Sigmund. Mate Dugandzic stole the ball off Sigmund and put in a great cross for Rutger Worm. Worm's first touch was great and his left footed volley was even better but it was saved Tony Warner in goal for Wellington.

On 28 minutes Manny Muscat put in a cross which then was blocked by Jonatan Germano. The Phoenix appealed for handball; the ball hit Germano's shoulder like the week before, no penalty given.

Eli Babalj embraces Mate Dugandzic after the exciting forward scores what is ultimately the winner. Heart skipper Fred and fans can't contain their joy. Photo: ANITA MILAS

Ten minutes later Heart had the next chance to open the scoring, but Dugandzic's free-kick was headed straight into the hands of Warner by an unmarked Rutger Worm.

On 41 minutes Mate Dugandzic opened the scoring after Fred took a free-kick quickly. Worm received the ball on the left and his left foot strike hit the post. Dugandzic was then in the right place to smash it home from six yards.

Three minutes after the restart Heart had a chance to extend their lead. Although Matt Thompson hit the post with a left footed strike after Eli Babalj played him in.

Only two minutes after that on 51 Wellington tried to comeback through Vince Lia who hit a powerful volley wide.

On 67 minutes Wellington were coming back into it, Adrian Madaschi sliced his right foot shot onto his own crossbar.

One minute later second-half substitute Dani Sanchez was causing some havoc as his cross was headed just wide by Tim Brown.

Heart went straight up the other end with Matt Thompson whose through ball was poked wide from Jason Hoffman.

Sanchez again almost opened his account with a brilliant free-kick but his strike hit the upright.

On 75 minutes Dugandzic could have doubled the lead after receiving the ball form Hoffman but his right footed attempt was saved by Warner.

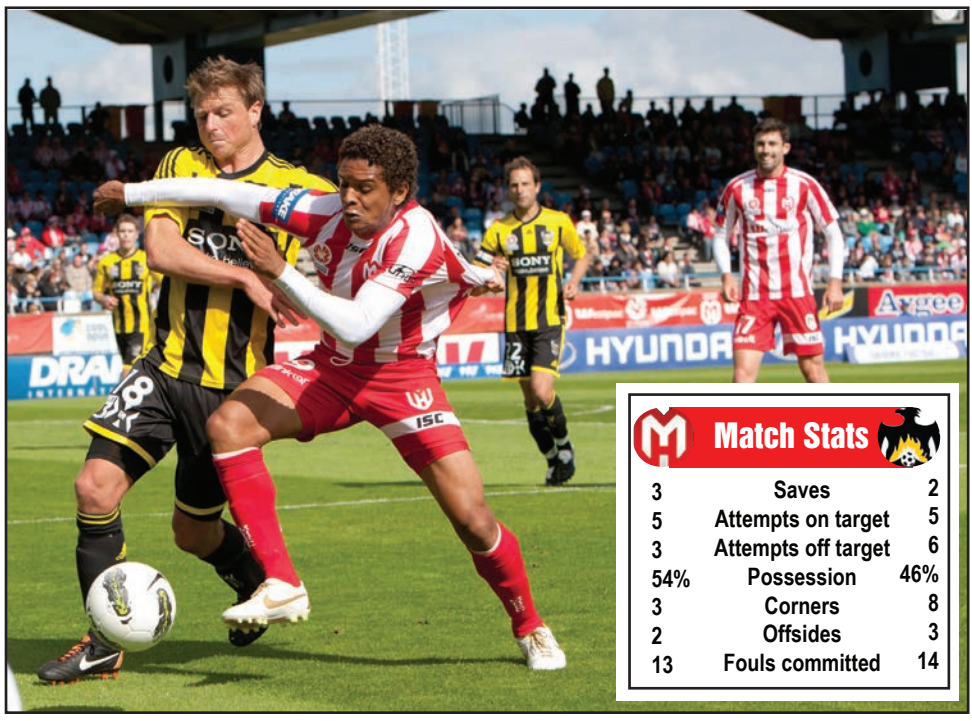
Hoffman was next to test Warner in goal but his towering header from a Behich cross went over the Wellington goal.

On 87 minutes Dani Sanchez could have snatched a late equaliser but his shot was blocked by Brendan Hamill.

In stoppage time Mirjan Pavlovic could have grabbed a late, late equaliser but his shot was hit straight at Clint Bolton in goal for Heart.

It finished 1-0 to Heart and they gain a vital three points to jump up the A-League table.

Phoenix's Manny Muscat stands his ground against Rutger Worm. Photo: ANITA MILAS

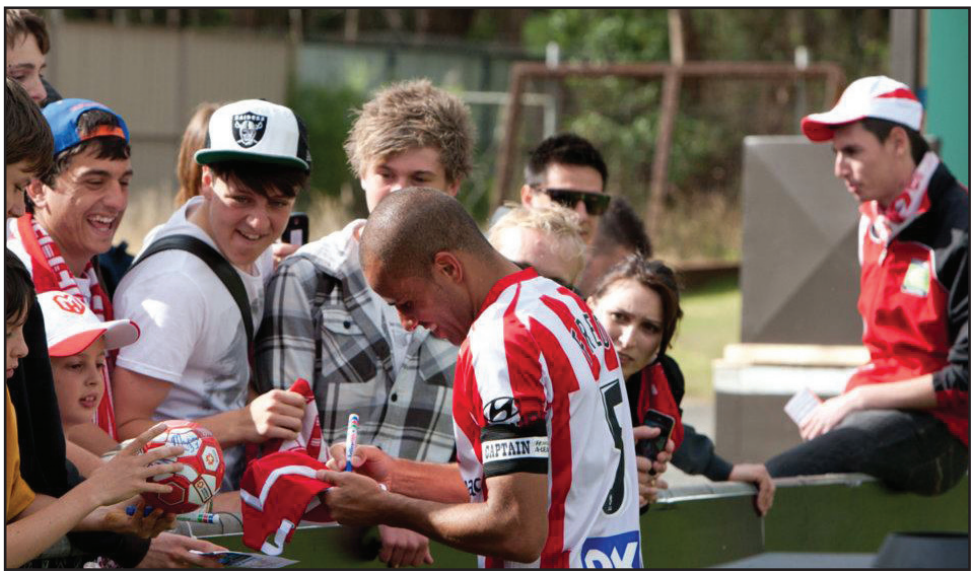


Match Stats

3	Saves	2
5	Attempts on target	5
3	Attempts off target	6
54%	Possession	46%
3	Corners	8
2	Offsides	3
13	Fouls committed	14

Wellington's Ben Sigmund and Heart's Maycon grapple for supremacy. Photo: ANITA MILAS

Danny Sanchez goes close with a free-kick that hits the post. Photo: ANITA MILAS



Heart's Fred attends to the autograph hunters after the match. Photo: ANITA MILAS

Classy Mariners run red hot

Adelaide United

0

CC Mariners

4

Match Details

Adelaide United FC 0
Central Coast Mariners 4 (Amini 30', Ibini 32', Zwaanswijk 38', Griffiths 66')
Referee: Kris Griffiths Jones
Crowd: 8,437 @ Hindmarsh Stadium

Adelaide United line-up: 1.Eugene Galekovic (gk), 2.Osama Malik, 4.Jon McKain (c), 7.Zenon Caravella, 11.Bruce Djite, 13.Ricardo Da Silva (5.Daniel Mullen 46'), 14.Cameron Watson (16.Spase Dilevski 65'), 17.Iain Ramsay, 18.Fabian Barbiero, 21.Francisco Usucar, 22.Milan Susak (8.Evgeniy Levchenko 76')

Substitutes not used: 20.Mark Birighitti (gk)
Yellow Cards: Susak 16', McKain 38', Mullen 73'
Red Cards: Nil

Central Coast Mariners line-up: 1.Matthew Ryan (Gk), 3.Joshua Rose, 4.Pedj Bojic, 6.Patrick Zwaanswijk, 7.John Hutchinson, 8.Rostyn Griffiths (11.Oliver Bozanic 68'), 9.Bernie Ibini, 14.Michael McGlinchey (12. Troy Hearfield 74'), 18.Alex Wilkinson, 19.Matt Simon (2.Daniel McBreen 77'), 22.Mustafa Amini

Substitutes not used: 20.Justin Pasfield (Gk)
Yellow Cards: Rose 19', Zwaanswijk 79', Bojic 83'
Red Cards: Nil

By Nat Adamopoulos

If ever there was a prime example of how hard work pays off, Coach Graham Arnold and the Central Coast Mariners were just that, with their emphatic 4-0 demolishment of the embattled Adelaide side away at Hindmarsh Stadium in Round 9 of the Hyundai A-League.

Stamping their authority on the match, the Mariners went about in the technical destruction of the flailing home side with secret weapons Mustafa Amini and Bernie Ibini front and centre, both scoring within the first half hour of the match. Experienced Patrick Zwaanswijk slotted in a third to add insult to injury before the half time whistle, with the final blow coming in the 66th minute care of a Rostyn Griffiths header that put the proverbial nail in the coffin for troubled Reds.

Despite all the talk from many around town of the disappointing month the club had and questions being unanswered as to why, fans were trying to keep positive, but with the likes of Cassio and Van Dijk still unavailable, the general consensus was that this was going to be some ask. On the flip side of this was the promotion of local lads into the side with Fabian Barbiero, Osama Malik and Ricardo Da Silva all giving fans something to relate to, keeping hopes up which for the first ten to fifteen minutes looked likely. The Reds came out playing competitively, engaging fans with several passages of play that created chances for Da Silva, the side looking promising. But that didn't last for long, as the first half progressed the Mariners tightened up and began to create their own chances forcing the homeside to lose their shape and structure and make basic football errors.

The Mariner's Amini was the first to step up, young and enthusiastic backing himself, giving Adelaide stalwart keeper Eugene Galekovic much work to do with several shots at goal that the Reds keeper covered. But a crucial defensive error in the 30th minute by the Adelaide backline resulted in Amini capitalising, scoring the first goal of the match much to the delight of his coach.

Just two minutes later a great cross in from deep near the right corner post from the Mariners found an unmarked Ibini waiting, volleying the ball past the keeper and leaving the Adelaide defence watching the ball go in. Adelaide tried to crack the Mariners defence through Barbiero in the 35th minute, the midfielder booting the ball in just high of the crossbar. But as quick as the United fans had hope in their eyes, they soon were in despair as Ibini was held back in the box by Reds Captain Jon McKain, the obvious tugging of shorts giving referee Kris Griffiths Jones no option but to award a penalty.

As experienced Zwaanswijk stepped up and slotted the spotkick away, heads were in hands around the ground with fans left wondering what on earth could their homeside do to get out of jail this time. A last ditch effort to peg one back just before the half time whistle by Adelaide frontman Bruce Djite was blocked by the Central Coast defence, the shot rebounding to present an opportunity for Cameron Watson who skied it high over the target.

Changes were made by Coolen with the start of the second half, defender Daniel Mullen coming on for attacker Ricardo sending a message to fans that the coach seemed more comfortable to contain rather than to chase the win. Not so for the visitors, as Graham Arnold was going in for the kill, his chargers unlucky not to score their fourth in the 50th minute via Matt Simon, as a shot ricocheted and hit the post giving the Reds a lucky escape.

An adrenalin-charged Watson tried his hand at being the lone ranger in the 55th minute, weaving his way upfield through towards goal, only to complete the run by shooting over the crossbar again to agonising moans from the 8,000 plus crowd. Three minutes later he was again desperately trying to break through to score, but to no avail. Ten minutes later Coolen had him substituted for Spase Dilevski, leaving the crowd mesmerised asking why when at that time he seemed to be the only one with heart and passion busting out to change the score. With that change, a foul brought on a free kick conversion in the 66th minute for the Mariners, Michael McGlinchey's ball finding Griffiths head, the goal forcing Hindmarsh into a deathly silence.

By this time fans had endured enough and an exodus towards the turnstiles had begun, many waving their hands at the embarrassing display of football they had witnessed. Hometown boy playing for the visitors Oliver Bozanic subbed on in the 69th minute almost found the back of the net himself, his shot just breezing across the face of goal. United's Iain Ramsay tried to save face with a burst of energy but found the backline of Central Coast impenetrable. With three minutes to go, Galekovic off another one of those classic saves, this time finger-tipping a Daniel McBreen shot just over the woodwork. As the referee blew his whistle for the Reds pain to end, many of the Adelaide United faithful showed their disgust by booing the woeful side off the pitch.

Mustafa Amini finishes off a great move to score the first of three Mariner goals in a six minute frenzy. Photo: JOE JANKO

In the post match conference Coolen took the bullet for the side, apologising for the shocking slump the Reds were in. "It's not nice when you see your team playing like that and we're definitely a team with some problems," he said. "I'm not looking for excuses because it was very bad… we have to move and do better because that's our job and we're very disappointed. I'm disappointed myself, I'm responsible for it at the end of the day, that's how it is. The players tried to do their best, it's just in technical ways we make big mistakes. For me disappointing your supporters is a big thing because they come here and buy tickets...and they support us every week and like I said, it was disappointing."

Adelaide United now have to face their arch rival Melbourne Victory, who themselves are trying to bounce back from their lack of performance this season. With both sides in similar situations trying to turn around their disappointing seasons, fans from both clubs say its now or never to see the talked about changes happen. It's not a case of when or if.....it's a case of just do it. Whatever the case, the showdown at Etihad Stadium on Saturday night looks to be another ding dong battle to the death that will go down in the history books of across the border clashes.

Match Stats

3	Saves	1
6	Attempts on target	10
5	Attempts off target	8
50%	Possession	50%
5	Corners	4
3	Offsides	5
18	Fouls committed	15

Mariner Matt Simon shows his composure on the ball amid Adelaide United pressure. Photo: JOE JANKO

Bernie Ibini mows down Jon McKain forcing the Adelaide Unted defender to concede a penalty shortly afterwards. Photo: JOE JANKO

Glory ends 5 match winless run

Perth Glory

2

Gold Coast United

0

Match Details

Perth Glory: 2 (Sterjovski 19', Smeltz 54')
Gold Coast United:0
nib Stadium, Perth
Saturday 3rd December 2011
Attendance: 6484
Referee: Strebre Delovski

Perth Glory: 1.Danny Vukovic (Gk), 2.Josh Mitchell, 3.Bas Van Den Brink, 4.Billy Mehmet, 7.Jacob Burns (C), 9.Shane Smeltz, 10.Liam Miller, 17.Todd Howarth, 21.Mile Sterjovski (22.Adam Taggart 70'), 25. Trent Mcclenahan, 27.Andrezinho (14.Steven Mcgarry 79')

Substitutes Not Used: 8.Adam Hughes, 30. Lewis Italiano (Gk)
Yellow Cards: Mcclenahan 15', Miller 37', Van Den Brink 44'

Gold Coast United: 1.Glen Moss (Gk), 3.Michael Thwaite (C), 4.Zac Anderson, 5.Kristian Rees, 7.Golgol Mebrahtu (16. Maceo Rigters 46'), 12.DyLan Macallister, 14.Ben Halloran, 15.Adama Traore, 18.James Brown (27. Ambesager Yosief 85'), 23.Dylan Mcgowan (29.Mitch Bevan 79'), 24.Jonas Salley

Substitutes Not Used: 20.Jerrad Tyson (GK), 27. Ambesager YOSIEF,
Yellow cards: Anderson 19', Salley 26', Rees 77'

Red cards: Anderson 62'

By Jacob Kagi

Perth Glory put a frustrating five-game winless run behind them and continued Gold Coast United's woes with a comfortable 2-0 home victory on Saturday night.

The Glory won thanks to successfully converted penalties either side of half-time from Mile Sterjovski and Shane Smeltz, who ensured his former side's losing run continued for a fifth game.

Defeat saw United, who finished the game with 10 men after young central defender Zac Anderson was sent off in the second half, remain anchored to the bottom of the ladder with four points separating them and ninth-placed Adelaide and increased the scrutiny on under-pressure coach Miron Bleiberg.

The hosts made a handful of changes, with Sterjovski and Liam Miller among those to return to the starting 11 and the two attacking players made strong impacts in front of a disappointing crowd of 6,484.

Perth made the stronger start and nearly took advantage just seven minutes in when Smeltz was allowed a close-range free header, but he miscued his attempt into the ground and Glen Moss was able to come out and claim.

But the Glory's reward came 12 minutes later during a bizarre bit of play, when Anderson astonishingly raised his arm well above his head while trying to deal with a routine cross and was called for handball.

Sterjovski took the subsequent penalty and sent Moss the wrong way, continuing a memorable week for the former Socceroos winger, who also celebrated the birth of his third child earlier in the week.

Glory get back that winning feeling after a barren run through the month of November. Photo: EDUARDO MORGAN

The visitors took a conservative approach into the game and struggled to get numbers forward at times, but they were nearly back level just after Sterjovski's goal when Jonas Salley was allowed a header in space but sent it over.

James Brown, who was back in the Gold Coast team after returning from Olyroos duty, and Dylan Macallister both went close to finding an equaliser for Bleiberg's side before half-time.

Yet their best chance came just after the break when Adama Traore made a strong run forward and found Brown with space in the box, but the youngster's shot was too close to Danny Vukovic and the chance was wasted.

And Brown was made to pay for the wasted chance when Ian Ferguson's men doubled their advantage just 60 seconds later. Ben Halloran smashed into the back of Andrezinho just inside the box to give Glory another spot-kick, which Smeltz calmly converted for his fifth goal of the season.

While United would have maintained some hope of an unlikely comeback after conceding the second goal, any realistic chance vanished when Anderson received his second yellow card for a clumsy and unnecessary challenge on Andrezinho.

Gold Coast found it even more difficult to get numbers forward when they were reduced to 10 men but on a rare foray forward they nearly got back in the game in the 72nd minute when Macallister broke free, but right-back Trent McClenahan got back to make a vital block and save the day for Perth.

Olyroos representative Adam Taggart nearly had a goal shortly after he was brought on to make his first appearance of the season and later had an effort disallowed for offside.

The Glory also went close through Billy Mehmet, who produced one of his best performances for the club, when his powerful drive travelled just over the bar and Liam Miller was denied by Moss from long-range in the dying seconds as they went on to take the three points.

While victory provided Ferguson with a much-needed reprieve, his side faces a tough upcoming run with back-to-back away games against Sydney and Wellington before home fixtures against Melbourne Heart and the in-form Central Coast Mariners.

Meanwhile, Gold Coast's finals hopes will become even slimmer if they can't end their disastrous run and take all three points off fellow strugglers Adelaide at home on Sunday.

Match Stats

2	Saves	2
6	Attempts on target	2
7	Attempts off target	4
53%	Possession	47%
8	Corners	3
6	Offsides	1
16	Fouls committed	20

Perth Glory celebrate after Shane Smeltz's goal effectively wrapped up the 3 points. Photo: EDUARDON MORGAN

Mile Sterjovski scores from the spot to get the Glory off to a promising start. Photo: EDUARDO MORGAN

Jets fightback stuns unlucky Victory

Newcastle Jets

3

Melbourne Victory

1

Match Details

Newcastle Jets 3 (Ryan Griffiths 26' pen, 88'. Labinot Haliti 47')
Melbourne Victory 1 (Carlos Hernandez 20')
Venue: Ausgrid Stadium
Crowd: 17,245
Referee: Jarred Gillett

Newcastle Jets: 4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley, 5. Tiago Calvano, 7. Kasey Wehrman (6. Ben Kantarovski 76'), 8. Jeremy Brockie (9. Michael Bridges 84'), 10. Ruben Zadkovich, 11. Tarek Elrich, 12. Jobe Wheelhouse (C), 13. Byun Sung-Hwan, 14. Labinot Haliti (22. Ali Abbas 71'), 19. Matthew Nash (Gk), 23. Ryan Griffiths.
Substitutes Not Used: 30. Jack Duncan (Gk)
Yellow Cards: Tiago Calvano 29', Labinot Haliti 57', Ruben Zadkovich 81'
Red Cards: Nil

Melbourne Victory: 3. Fabio, 4. Petar Franjic, 6. Leigh Broxham, 10. Archie Thompson, 11. Marco Rojas (19. Isaka Cernak 66'), 13. Diogo Ferreira (8. Grant Brebner 45'), 14. Billy Celeski, 16. Carlos Hernandez, 21. Ante Covic (Gk), 22. Harry Kewell (18. Danny Allsopp 75'), 23. Adrian Leijer (C)
Substitutes Not Used: 20. Lawrence Thomas (Gk)
Yellow Cards: Fabio 9', Marco Rojas 26', Leigh Broxham 36'
Red Cards: nil

By Shaun Dyas

The Newcastle Jets fought back from an early Carlos Hernandez wonder strike to heap more pressure on under fire Victory coach Mehmet Durakovic, prevailing 3-1 at Ausgrid Stadium.

The home side were deserved winners of the contest in front of a season high crowd of 17,245, but it could have been a different outcome if one decision had of went the Victory's way.

Newcastle substitute Ben Kantarovski clumsily turned over possession to Victory livewire Archie Thompson in the 79th minute. The Victory striker was through on goal only to be stopped by a mistimed Nikolai Topor-Stanley challenge as he was set to pull the trigger.

Victory manager Durakovic felt his side should have been awarded a penalty and had Topor-Stanley sent off.

"We all make mistakes but I thought we should have had a penalty and a guy could have got sent off," Durakovic said. "So, it's disappointing but Newcastle are very hard to beat at home."

.The incident would have certainly changed the course of the game with the home side only leading 2-1 at the time. It would however have been unfair on the home side to draw or lose the match as they were in control for long periods.

Their first chance arrived in the 8th minute. After sustained pressure, the ball fell to Kiwi winger Jeremy Brockie on the edge of the Victory penalty area. He used the outside of his right foot and bent a sumptuous strike to the right of former Jets keeper Ante Covic. The keeper could only stand and hope the shot went wide and luckily for him it missed by centimetres.

Against the flow of the game, the Victory took the lead in the 20th minute. Newcastle turned the ball over in midfield and Harry Kewell fired a quick ball to the feet of Costa Rican Hernandez. He quickly controlled the ball and swept a stunning curling effort past the outstretched Matthew Nash and into the back of the net from 20 yards.

Labinot Halitit meets a Jamie Brockie cross at the far post and heads a bullet past Ante Covic to out the Jets 2-1 in front. Photo: BEN NEVILLE

Match Stats

Newcastle Jets		Victory
3	Saves	2
6	Attempts on target	6
6	Attempts off target	3
56%	Possession	44%
9	Corners	10
0	Offsides	5
12	Fouls committed	11

The lead lasted only 6 minutes. Young kiwi winger Marco Rojas appeared to have a brain snap and fouled Ryan Griffiths in a tackle that was more befitting of the other football codes in this country. The Jets wide man duly picked himself up and sent Covic the wrong way from the spot to the relief of the parochial home crowd.

A familiar pattern began to emerge in the match with the Jets dominating possession and territory. The Victory was always dangerous on the counter and it was a surprise to see the score line level at the break.

The home side wasted no time gaining the ascendancy in the second half and took the lead in the 47th minute. A raking ball from skipper Jobe Wheelhouse found an unmarked Brockie on the right edge of the area. He stood up a cross to the far post which was met by striker Labinot Haliti who had the easy task of nodding in from 4 yards.

The Jets then began to go into their shell which led to a couple of chances for the visitors. Star signing Harry Kewell was unlucky not to score in the 57th minute.

A ball was whipped in from the right touchline where it found Kewell at the back post. It looked as if the Socceroo had fluffed his lines, but on reflection it was a stunning piece of defending from Jets right back Tarek Elrich that preserved the advantage. He got the slightest of touches which was enough to guide the effort just past the post.

The Victory became increasingly desperate and the match started to have a feel that something was going to give. The inevitable happened in the 88th minute.

The tireless Ruben Zadkovich forced a turnover deep in the Victory's half and was through one-on-one with Covic. Zadkovich's effort was smartly parried by the imposing keeper but unluckily for him it fell for Griffiths. The striker had the easiest of tasks as he stroked the ball into the empty net from 8 yards and rushed off to the acclaim of the Novocastrian faithful.

Newcastle manager Gary Van Egmond felt it was a deserved victory for his side as they continue their impressive home form.

"I don't think we're 100 per cent over the moon with the performance but I think the way which we got the result, the resilience the boys showed and obviously the effectiveness in the front third was very pleasing," he said.

The Jets now look ahead to the crunch encounter with their arch rivals the Central Coast Mariners next Saturday afternoon, while the under pressure Victory host Adelaide in Melbourne later that evening.

Carlos Hernadez curls a spectacular shot from the edge of the box to give the Victory a 1-0 lead. Photo: PETER NEVILLE

Ryan Griffiths scores the equaliser to get the Jets back in the game. Photo: PETER NEVILLE

Brisbane Roar v Melbourne Heart — Fri 9 Dec Suncorp Stadium 8:00pm

Roar Line Up

1. Michael Theoklitos (GK)
2. Matt Smith (Capt.)
3. Shane Stefanutto
4. Matt Jurman
5. Ivan Franjic
6. Erik Paaratlu
7. Besart Berisha
8. Massimo Murdocca
9. Kofi Danning
10. Henrique
11. Issey Nakajima-Farra
16. Mohamed Adnan
17. Mitch Nichols
18. Luke Brattan
19. Jack Hingert
22. Thomas Broich
30. Matt Acton (GK).
two to be omitted

In: 9. Kofi Danning (promoted), 19. Jack Hingert (promoted), 22. Thomas Broich (returns from heel injury)

Out: 21. James Meyer (adductor injury – 1 week)

Unavailable: None

By Jarrod Ellis

For the first time this season Brisbane Roar will go into their match on the weekend with an air of normality surrounding the fixture. Having lost 2-0 to Sydney last week the Roar no longer has a record 36 match unbeaten run to defend when they face off against Melbourne Heart at Suncorp Stadium this Friday.

Brisbane's manager Ange Postecoglou has already rejected suggestions that last weekend's loss was anything but a massive disappointment for his club.

"It (the streak) was never a distraction, we never saw it as a distraction, we never saw it as any sort of added pressure, it was just something that was happening because we were doing well," he said.

"There's no relief because the record's over, sometimes when you get on a run like ours people expect you to win all the time but that's not how sport works.

Brisbane suffered last week from a lack of creativity in attack and they'll be hoping that the likely return of Thomas Broich will help see the club return to winning ways. Broich returned to training on Wednesday, the first time since Brisbane's 4-0 win against Perth Glory almost a fortnight ago.

Heart face Roar on rebound

Odds:
Roar 1.53
Draw 4.10
Heart 7.00

Radio broadcaster: 774 ABC Melbourne / 1116 SEN Melbourne

Head-to-Head:
All matches (played 3):
Brisbane Roar wins 3,
Melbourne Heart wins 0 (0 draws)

It isn't all good news on the injury front for Brisbane though with Brazilian winger Henrique in doubt after picking up a knock on the weekend and James Meyer having been ruled out of the fixture with a groin injury.

The Heart enter this Friday's match on the back of a win over Wellington Phoenix that has seen them stay firmly entrenched in the finals race, sitting only two points behind third-place Sydney on the ladder.

With three wins from the last four matches, Heart is without question one of the form teams in the competition, having collected 10 points from the last five matches.

However, manager John van't Schip believes there's plenty of room for improvement in his side.

"We know that we have quick players up front who can decide a game in a split second. But we also want to play more controlled from the back, on the midfield," he said

"We want to keep the ball for longer, play with more possession. That's something that we're talking about working on a lot."

"And that's something that we have to improve on because the games are going too up and down. We have to have the ball more, control the possession more."

Melbourne will do well to heed van't Ship's words and work hard to retain the ball against a Brisbane side that has so far suffocated their opponents under sheer weight of possession at Suncorp Stadium this season.

Heart's hopes of a victory have been boosted by the return of Adrian Madaschi, the defender having been cleared for selection after limping off last weekend. Simon Colosimo has also returned to training this week but is reportedly unlikely to take to the pitch on Friday.

Kiss of Death
Roar 2-0 Heart

Heart Line Up

1.Clint Bolton (gk)
2.Michael Marrone
3.Brendan Hamill
5.Fred
6.Matt Thompson
7.Rutger Worm
9.Maycon
10.Wayne Srhoj
11.Alex Terra
13.Jonatan Germano
15.David Williams
16.Aziz Behich
17.Jason Hoffman
18.Curtis Good
19.Eli Babalj
23.Mate Dugandzic
25.Adrian Madaschi
30.Sebastian Mattei (gk)
three to be omitted

In: Wayne Srhoj (returns from suspension), Alex Terra (returns from injury), David Williams (promoted)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Nick Kalmar (back – four weeks), Kliment Taseski (fractured foot – long term)

Wellington Phoenix v Perth Glory — Sat 10 Dec Westpac Stadium 3:00pm

Phoenix Line Up

1. Mark Paston (GK)
2. Manny Muscat
3. Tony Lochhead
4. Brent Griffith
6. Tim Brown
7. Leo Bertos
8. Paul Ifill
9. Chris Greenacre
11. Daniel
12. Nicky Ward
14, Mirjan Pavlovic
15. Cameron Lindsay
17. Vince Lia
18. Ben Sigmund
20, Tony Warner (GK)
21. Dani Sanchez
22. Andrew Durante (C)
two to be omitted

In: Brent Griffiths (promoted), Cameron Lindsay (promoted).

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Lucas Pantelis (knee injury - indefinite), Jimmy Downey (knee injury – 1 to 2 weeks)

By Joe Gallagher

One of the talking points of games between Wellington Phoenix and Perth Glory has always been the travel.

This week, however, Glory will have a brand new reason to detest airport lounges after spending a full day grounded in Perth before cancelling a visit to Sydney FC on Tuesday, only to fly the length of the continent again on Thursday.

The question is, will this play into Ian Ferguson's hands or Ricki Herbert's?

On one hand, the week's confusion has to cause some disruption the side. But on the other, Perth will no longer backing up three days after the matchup with the Sky Blues – instead, they have had a whole week to reflect upon their 2-0 win against the Gold Coast which saw them settle once again into a top six position.

And for the Phoenix it means that they'll take on a high flying and rejuvenated Glory outfit, off the back of their disappointing loss against Melbourne Heart in Morwell.

This side of the Tasman the match has already been billed a must-win for the home side, in an already tricky week made even trickier by a trip down south to Dunedin, to host champions Brisbane Roar next Wednesday.

And while we are still only a third of the way into the season, it might not necessarily be wrong to heap the pressure on the Phoenix. They're languishing on third-bottom, knowing full well that failure to pick up three points on Saturday will see them slip further out of touch with the playoff spots.

Phoenix strive for Glory

Head-to-Head: All matches (played 14): Wellington Phoenix wins 6, Perth Glory wins 5 (3 draws)

Odds:
Phoenix 2.15
Draw 3.40
Glory 3.50

Radio broadcaster: SportFM 91.3

Interestingly this match will see the return of two of Herbert's most impressive signings – Shane Smeltz and Danny Vukovic – to the nation's capital. Smeltz scored ___ goals for the club over his first three years in the A-League and Vukovic's last touch of the ball at Westpac Stadium saw him become the first goalkeeper to find the net in over six seasons. The former, especially, one of the league's most talented marksmen, has been a void that Herbert has struggled to fill.

But the men asked to fill it will be in full swing come Saturday. Paul Ifill is fit again and looking dangerous up front, and the creative Dani Sanchez will be a welcome return for a side that has lacked innovation in the front third all season.

But at the back, discipline will be a serious issue as yellow cards and suspensions start to slowly creep up on a coach whose first nine games were tainted with a slimness of squad, caused by injuries and suspensions.

Having already lost 1-0 to Perth earlier in the season, Phoenix will be wary of a side which has strengths across the park – none more than Smeltz and Brazilian winger Andrezinho, fresh off the back of another excellent performance against the Gold Coast.

So while travelling this week might not have been quite as arduous as the Glory had thought, there is still one of world sports' longest domestic road trips to conquer and a gusty Phoenix side who will be desperate to make a hasty return to the winners' circle.

The week they've had, Glory will truly have to overcome the wind, the rain, and the Phoenix, to pick up three points on Saturday.

Kiss of Death
Phoenix 2-1 Glory

Glory Line Up

1.Danny Vukovic (Gk)
2.Josh Mitchell
3.Bas Van Den Brink
4.Billy Mehmet
5.Steve Pantelidis
7.Jacob Burns (C)
8.Adam Hughes
9.Shane Smeltz
10.Liam Miller
15.Tommy Amphlett
17.Todd Howarth
21.Mile Sterjovski
22.Adam Taggart
25. Trent Mcclenahan
27.Andrezinho
30. Lewis Italiano (Gk)
One To Be Omitted

In: 5.Steve Pantelidis (Promoted), 15. Tommy Amphlett (Promoted)

Out: Steven Mcgarry (Omitted)
Unavailable: 6.Chris Coyne (Achilles – 3 Months), 11.Victor Sikora (Hip – Long Term Injury List), 12.Scott Neville (Knee), 13.Travis Dodd (Hamstring- 1 Week),16.Evan Berger (Hamstring – 4-Weeks), 20.Neil Young (Abdominal)

CC Mariners v Newcastle Jets

Sat 10 Dec Bluetongue Stdm 5:30pm

Mariners Line Up

1. Mathew Ryan (Gk)
2. Daniel McBreen
3. Joshua Rose
4. Pedj Bojic
6. Patrick Zwaanswijk
7. John Hutchinson
8. Rostyn Griffiths
9. Bernie Ibini
11. Oliver Bozanic
12. Troy Hearfield
14. Michael McGlinchey
18. Alex Wilkinson
19. Matt Simon
20. Justin Pasfield (Gk)
22. Mustafa Amini

In: Nil

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Nil

By Adrian Deans

Over the course of the A-League, there have been few more bitter rivalries than Mariners Jets. In fact, I would suggest none.

Mariners and Jets fans have a fair bit in common – living in regional NSW centres which tend to be a tad depressed (in comparison with Sydney), where football is both a popular diversion and a keenly pursued career path.

The fans ought to brothers, seeing into each others' souls and united against the flash types from Sydney, Melbourne and all the other capitals. But they're not. They hate each other and the F3 proximity just makes it ten times worse.

On the pitch, it is not okay to lose. The players are aware of the fans' feelings on the matter and these games tend to reach hysterical heights where passion swamps judgment and coolness comes at a premium.

For that reason, I'm tipping Mustafa Amini to have a major impact on this game. Amini was outstanding in the Mariners' dismantling of Adelaide and few players in the Australian game have his vision, tight control and capacity to put team mates into goal scoring positions. If he can repeat just a fraction of that performance at home, it should be enough to make the difference.

The Jets will be aware of his potential and will be going all out to unsettle him physically and keep him in his shell. The Jets are coming off a win against the Victory, but it was a win handed to them courtesy of an outrageously bad refereeing decision. Archie Thompson should have had a penalty and Topor-Stanley should have been red carded – with the likely result 2 – 2 and Newcastle playing the rest of the game with ten men.

In contrast, the Mariners were magnificent away to Adelaide, playing a style of football reminiscent of Brisbane at their best. When a player the calibre of Ollie Bozanic is finding it hard to break into a side, you know there's quality to spare. Led by Zwaanswijk and Wilkinson, with Rose and Bojic both getting forward out wide, and Simon and Ibini forming such a lethal combination up front, the Mariners are completely back into their stride from last year and on this form, few teams can stay with them.

Despite the Jets sitting in fourth place, on current form I think the Mariners are a three goal better side. Of course, in an F3 derby, the form book goes out the window. Jeremy Brockie and Ryan Griffiths are having tremendous seasons – there are goals in them but I suspect they'll concede at least two.

Adrian Deans is the author of Mr Cleansheets – published by Vulgar Press, distributed by Dennis Jones and Associates and available in all good book stores. ebook also available at www.mr-cleansheets.com

Kiss of Death
Mariners 2-1 Jets

Jets Line Up

1. Ben Kennedy (gk)
2. Taylor Regan
4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley
5. Tiago Calvano
6. Ben Kantarovski
7. Kasey Wehrman
8. Jeremy Brockie
9. Michael Bridges
10. Ruben Zadkovich
11. Tarek Elrich
12. Jobe Wheelhouse (c)
13. Sung-Hwan Byun
14. Labinot Haliti
19. Matthew Nash
22. Ali Abbas
23. Ryan Griffiths
24. Francis Jeffers
25. Jacob Pepper

three to be omitted

In: 1. Ben Kennedy (gk), 17.James Virgili, 2. Taylor Regan, 24. Francis Jeffers

Out: 30. Jack Duncan
Unavailable: Nil

Melb Victory v Adelaide United

Sat 10 Dec Etihad Stadium 7:45pm

Victory Line Up

2. Matthew Foschini
3. Fabio
4. Petar Franjic
6. Leigh Broxham
7. Matthew Kemp
9. Jean Carlos Solorzano
10. Archie Thompson
11. Marco Rojas
13. Diogo Ferreira
14. Billy Celeski
15. Tom Pondeljak
16.Carlos Hernandez
17, Jimmy Jeggo
18. Danny Allsopp
19. Isaka Cernak
20. Lawrence Thomas (GK)
21. Ante Covic
22. Harry Kewell
23. Adrian Leijer (c)

four to be omitted

In: 7. Matthew Kemp (returns from injury), 2. Matthew Foschini (returns from suspension)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: 1.Tando Velaphi (stress fracture), 12. Rodrigo Vargas (suspended)

By John Clark

Melbourne and Adelaide will this week play out another installment of the leagues oldest and fiercest rivalry, in what will be the home side's last game at Etihad Stadium for the season.

Over the last six seasons these sides have been involved in some classic contests with the Victory regularly coming out on top. Their 6-0 triumph over Adelaide in the 2007 Grand Final will be remembered as part of Australian football folklore for a long time to come, while the 2009 Grand Final win wasn't as glamorous it was another bitter blow to a United side who failed to beat their rivals for 11 games. .

The Reds however have recently gone about rectifying the Victory's dominance over them; they broke that long running unbeaten streak against them in emphatic style last season smashing the Victory 4-1 at AAMI Park and have since racked up two home wins against Durakovic's side.

These sides find themselves at the crossroads this season, they have both registered two wins and both find themselves outside the top 6. Fans are starting to grow impatient with their respective managers and the losing manager from this game will have a nervous couple of days.

Last week the Reds were embarrassed by the Mariners 4-0, which was the clubs worst ever home defeat. Had it not been for Eugene Galekovic the damage could have been far worse. Rini Coolen continues to say that there are no excuses for his side's horrendous form, but in the same breath mentions the clubs spate of injury worries.

He does however have a case, as the team is looks toothless without Sergio Van Dijk and Dario Vidosic, both of whom are unexpected to be fit for this game.

The Victory once again left Newcastle with nothing to show, a feeling that has been regularly experienced throughout the history of the league. They got off to a fantastic start with a long range Hernandez strike opening the scoring early on, but as has been the tale of the Victory's season thus far Marco Rojas conceded a needless penalty and the Jets went into the break all square and with their tails up.

The Victory had hardly touched the ball in the second half before the Jets were in front via Labinot Haliti. It may have been a different story had the referee and/or linesman spotted Nikolai Topor-Stanley's blatant foul on Thompson when the star Victory striker was in on goal, but it was not to be and Ryan Griffiths put the contest to bed with a tap in with 2 minutes left on the clock. The Victory also played a glorified practice match against LA Galaxy midweek and despite some individual moments of brilliance from Carlos Hernandez there was not too much to get excited about.

If nothing else this match should be a fierce contest. The real story to come out of this match won't be who wins the contest, but who loses it. Expect the manager of the losing side to be under immense pressure to keep his job in the coming week.

Kiss of Death
Victory 2-0 AUFC

Adelaide Utd Line Up

1.Eugene Galekovic (gk)
2.Osama Malik
3.Nigel Boogaard
4.Jon McKain (c)
5.Daniel Mullen
7.Zenon Caravella
8.Evgeniy Levchenko
9.Sergio van Dijk
10.Dario Vidosic
11.Bruce Djite
13.Ricardo Da Silva
14.Cameron Watson
16.Spase Dilevski
17.Iain Ramsay
18.Fabian Barbiero
20.Mark Birighitti (gk)
21.Francisco Usucar
22.Milan Susak

three to be omitted

In: Nigel Boogaard (returns from suspension), Sergio van Dijk (returns from injury), Dario Vidosic (returns from injury)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Cassio (ankle)

The Week 9 midweek 'Community' match between Sydney FC and Perth Glory has been re-scheduled for Wednesday, 18 January 2012. KO 5.30pm

Gold Coast United v Sydney FC

Sun 11 Dec Skilled Park 5.00pm

Gold Coast Line Up

1.Glen Moss [gk]
3.Michael Thwaite (c)
5.Kristian Rees
6.Paul Beekmans
12.Dylan Macallister
13.Ante Rozic
14.Ben Halloran
15.Adama Traore
16.Maceo Rigters
17.Chris Harold
18.James Brown
20.Jerrad Tyson [gk]
21.Daniel Severino
22.Peter Jungschlager
23.Dylan McGowan
24.Jonas Salley
29.Mitch Bevan.
two to be omitted

In: 6.Paul Beekmans (return from foot injury), 13.Ante Rozic (return from knee injury), 17.Chris Harold (promoted), 21.Daniel Severino (promoted), 22.Peter Jungschlager (return from ankle injury)

Out: 4.Zac Anderson (suspended – 1 game), 7.Golgol Mebrahtu, (not selected), 26.Ambes Yosief (not selected).

Unavailable: 4.Zac Anderson (suspended – 1 game), 9.Joel Porter (calf – 3 weeks), 19.Chris Broadfoot (ankle injury – 6 weeks).

By Mike Salter

SFC set for another Qld scalp

Head-to-Head: All matches (played 7): Gold Coast United wins 4, Sydney FC wins 2 (1 draw)

Odds:
GCU 3.15
Draw 3.35
SFC 2.35

Two teams at opposite ends of the table face off on Sunday at Skilled Park. Gold Coast United, on a wretched losing streak, desperately need a win to avoid being left behind by the rest of the league. Sydney FC, on the back of a polished win against the competition leaders, will be looking to make up ground on Brisbane and the Central Coast.

Miron Bleiberg has had trouble settling on a regular first eleven this season, and Gold Coast's painful series of losses will have done little to discourage the unpredictable coach's penchant for tinkering. Zach Anderson's dismissal against Perth last week may mean a return to the starting eleven for Maceo Rigters, who has so far not lived up to expectations. Another who is yet to match his early-season form is wide man James Brown, whose lack of effectiveness in his previous game against Sydney FC appeared to adversely affect his confidence.

The last meeting between the two sides produced a five-goal thriller at the Sydney Football Stadium in which Bleiberg's side squandered a two-goal lead before conceding a last-ditch winner. With their loss to ten-man Melbourne Victory in mind as well, the home side will be only too aware of the need to retain their concentration and intensity for the full ninety minutes.

Sydney FC will be without both Mark Bridge and Terry Antonis once more, but their absences were not felt especially keenly in the important win over Brisbane; young Dimitri Petratos proved an excellent foil for Bruno Cazarine up front, his pace and movement causing constant trouble for the defending champions.

At the back, the inclusion of Shannon Cole in place of the suspended Scott Jamieson was a notable success last week, and Vitezslav Lavicka may opt to retain Cole in the starting eleven given Jamieson's indifferent performances so far this term. Sydney's back four were never less than sure-footed against Brisbane, with Pascal Bosschaart quickly becoming one of the most dominant defenders in the league.

And what of the midfield? Sydney's diamond has begun to function effectively in recent weeks, with Brett Emerton and Karol Kisel providing experience, flexibility and creativity on the flanks to complement the pugnacity of Terry McFlynn and the scheming of Nick Carle. Although Peter Jungschlager has been in promising form for the hosts as well, one would expect the visitors to dominate this area of the field.

Kiss of Death
Gold Coast 0-2 SFC

Sydney FC Line Up

1. Liam Reddy
2. Sebastian Ryall
3. Jamie Coyne
4. Pascal Bosschaart
5. Michael Beauchamp
6. Hirofumi Moriyasu
7. Brett Emerton
8. Karol Kisel
9. Bruno Cazarine
10. Nick Carle
11. Dimi Petratos
12. Shannon Cole
15. Terry McFlynn (c)
18. Juho Makela
20. Ivan Necevski
21. Scott Jamieson
23. Rhyan Grant (two to be omitted).

Ins: Scott Jamieson (returns from suspension), Hirofumi Moriyasu (promoted)

Outs: Nil

Injuries: Mark Bridge (back – 1 week), Terry Antonis (Rested – 1 week)

Robert Di Fabio

Records weren't broken on this occasion, although it certainly was an eventful week for contrasting reasons. The Australian unbeaten record was finally brought to a halt, as A-League front-runners Brisbane Roar were brought back down to earth by Sydney FC. While Central Coast Mariners, Newcastle Jets, Perth Glory and Melbourne Heart were at the winning end of the spectrum, Adelaide United and Gold Coast United's campaigns continue to spiral on a downward inclination. Finally, to end the week's proceedings La Galaxy's tour down under against an embattled Melbourne Victory attracted an array of media publicity, but was the trip an unparalleled success?

Brisbane Roar's run finally broken

It may have taken in excess of 14 months, however Sydney FC has finally accomplished what no other A-League outfit could execute for 37 outings – condemn pacesetters Brisbane Roar to defeat.

Before the Queensland team began its incredible run – which saw it set an Australian record for most consecutive fixtures unbeaten in any professional sporting code, negating rugby league club Eastern Suburbs' 35-game undefeated run from 1936-37 – it had not tasted defeat since Melbourne Victory romped Ange Postecoglou's troops 3-0 at AAMI Park on September 12, 2010. In fact, since Victory put the Roar to the sword, it was the final time Brisbane was held scoreless, before the Sky Blues finally nullified their incredible run of results.

In the pulsating 36-match unbeaten run, Brisbane hit the back of the net on 78 occasions, amid 16 different goalscorers. Custodian Michael Theoklitos kept the backline at bay with 11 clean sheets, whilst conceding 32 goals in the process. Postecoglou's men triumphed in 23 encounters (24 if we include the Grand Final victory over the Central Coast Mariners, where the home side won 4-2 on penalties following a 2-2 stalemate after the customary 90 minutes and extra time) and drew in 13 instances.

All good things must come to an end

conversely Brisbane's remarkable feat will be inscribed in the history books for some time yet. In today's professional sporting environment, it is difficult to envisage a team surpassing the Roar's extraordinary achievement. Salary cap constraints are the fundamental reason as to why the A-League is on such an even playing field. While some clubs have an elevated budget, overall there isn't too much disparity between the fledging teams.

After taking the above constituents into account, there is a sound basis to believe that this Brisbane team is the best side to play domestic football on Australian soil. The Roar has elevated the tactical nous of the competition, and has further raised the benchmark for competitive excellence. Let's hope this upward trend on the pitch prospers to new heights.

Australia gifted three places in 2012 Asian Champions League

Since the A-League's inauguration, the Asian Football Confederation has granted Australia with two places in the Asian Champions League. However, a recent reform has seen the AFC give Australia's top-flight division 2.5 places.

Adelaide United was anticipated to be entered into a play-off with the losing finalist of the AFC Cup – the second tier confederation competition in Asia – however the Chinese and Indonesian affiliates unexpectedly withdrew from the qualifiers, leaving three clubs from East Asia to contend for the two spots to round out the 32-team tournament.

The Reds can count their lucky stars, after being handed direct entry into the premier Asian club competition. It will be the club's fourth appearance in the ACL, having made the knockout rounds on two occasions – famously unearthing its way to the finale in 2008, only to fall at the last hurdle against Japanese powerhouse, Gamba Osaka. Adelaide will have the chance for redemption, when it meets the 2008 ACL champions, in what is set to be an exciting reunion. The Reds will also face Uzbekistan's Bunyodkor and a team vying for a play-off position.

Under the tutorship of Aurelio Vidmar, United's 2008 ACL campaign can be drawn with vast similarities to its current situation. In the 2007-08 season, Adelaide finished on the foot of the A-League table, struggling to find a winning formula. Whilst the Reds still have plenty of time to resurrect this term, comparable conditions are apparent.

Moving onto the A-League champions, Brisbane Roar have been handed a favourable draw. The competition front-runners will face China's Beijing Guon, Korea's Uslan Hyundai and the winner of the Japanese Emperor's Cup – which will be determined on January 1.

Whilst Postecoglou has conquered the local scene, the Asian panorama is one he is eager to surmount. The Roar are an exceedingly ambitious club, and will expect to make its passage through the knockout stages as its minimum objective. The football ethos adopted in this Brisbane outfit can rival any club in Asia at present; hopefully the Roar can convey their domestic form onto the continental avenue.

Central Coast Mariners, a whisker away from claiming its first A-League championship last season, will encompass a taxing schedule, amid of flurry of difficult opposition. The Gosford based outfit will face Socceroos Josh Kennedy's J-League outfit Nagoya Grampus – who recently won the Japanese league – Sasa Ognenovski's Korean side Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma and Chinse Super League club Tianjin Teda.

It will be the Mariners' second venture into Asia after making the round of 16 in its only appearance in 2009. Graham Arnold is moulding a highly competitive unit, able to play an attractive, attacking game-style. If his legion of players duplicates its successful brand of football onto the ACL, then the Central Coast may just sneak into the knockout stages.

Lock up the babysitters as David Beckham hits town...
Photo: DANIEL FLIS

Beckham mania engulfs Melbourne:

A crowd just shy of 35,000 went through the turnstiles on Tuesday night to witness David Beckham's LA Galaxy take the field against the A-League's biggest club Melbourne Victory. After the tie finished at 2-2, the American champions won the encounter 4-3 on penalties.

While the event was considered a success for the many theatregoers, in all truth, it resembled a hollow atmosphere which offered little but a glorified training spectacle. Football culture is an important ingredient to the match day experience, yet what was portrayed as a football event, was rather a contrasting representation.

The two active areas – the Blue and White Brigade and the South End – which have been a continuous figure since the foundational days of the A-League were not perceptible. The singing, chanting, emotion and noise generated by those vocal supporters were unfortunately deficient. While it's fantastic to play host to high profile teams akin to LA Galaxy, the code mustn't liberate the principles that craft the game, as enthusiasts know it.

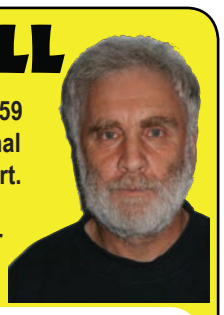
Money is at the forefront of exhibition events, and whilst it's imperative the make the venture worthwhile, it should not be a substitute for the traditions endured at a football outing.

The allure Beckham is an inducement for the wider public, and while the pop culture icon is a colossal attraction on the playing field, prices should not be inflated to the point where regular supporters aren't inclined to attend the spectacle.

Finally, the notion of Kewell versus Beckham disappointingly didn't come into fruition. Victory coach Mehmet Durakovic decided to leave the former Liverpool winger out of the squad, resting him for Saturday's crucial clash with Adelaide United. While the train of thought is understandable, it was really a slap in the face to the promotion of the event, and the people who paid premium prices to the game. In some ways, it could be summed up as a selfish act. When a player of Kewell's calibre is fit and healthy, he should have, at the very least made an appearance, for the credibility and integrity of the event. The Kewell versus Beckham tagline will regrettably be a tale never revealed.

Follow Robert on Twitter @RobertDiFabio

BOOTS 'N ALL



Followed football in Australia since 1959 and mesmerised by European Cup final 1960 , Real Madrid v Eintracht Frankfurt. Played the game for 45 years before retirement but still refereeing senior amateur.

with Roger Sleeman

YOUTH LEAGUE IGNORED

It was interesting to see Chris Payne, the Newcastle Jets striker, scoring a hat-trick against Adelaide United in the National Youth League two weeks ago.

It's a great shame not many people would have witnessed this feat because the match was not played at Hindmarsh before the A- League fixture.

I believe the youth league players are not showcased to the public as they were in the NSL when most matches were played as curtain raisers to the senior match.

People do want to see the talent coming through the ranks and it's a great incentive for these players to perform if they have a larger audience.

Various logistical reasons have been given for the present situation but if the NSL promoted the Youth League successfully, why can't the A-League?

BECKHAM CIRCUS

It was an exhibition match, with the star attraction David Beckham, but it was really Robbie Keane and Landon Donovan who stole the show for LA Galaxy against the Victory.

Most of the Galaxy players went through the motions on the night but Keane always gives value for money whatever the occasion and Donovan is a class act.

The large crowd could only heap praise on Beckham every time he touched the ball, although his work rate in the first half was low.

However, he did create some wonderful chances in the second half with some precision passes which certainly reminded the spectators of his wonderful vision and reading of the game.

As a promotion for football it was a great success but it's a great shame Harry Kewell didn't make an appearance, especially considering the big pre match hype of his imminent clash with Beckham.

COMMENTARY ON BECKHAM

Robbie Slater couldn't produce enough accolades about David Beckham in the Fox broadcast.

Even when Becks was playing balls well short of his teammates, he could do nothing wrong.

Slater suggested he was probably the greatest icon the football world had ever seen and Mike Cockerill mentioned Pele and Slater retorted with Maradona in the same breath.

I think informed supporters would also include George Best, Bobby Charlton, Johan Cruyff, Eusebio and Franz Beckenbauer in a list of football icons next to the above mentioned.

Slater also stated Beckham was the greatest crosser which was a fair comment but you couldn't dismiss the claims of Bobby Charlton and Glen Hoddle for this honour. Significantly, it was only late in his career that Beckham learned to cross with his left foot after being criticised by George Best as a one footed player.

Matt Simon is surely due for a Socceroos call up.

ALLSOP AND FOSCHINI

Danny Allsop couldn't take a trick against the Galaxy when he took at least four strikes on goal in the first half.

Unfortunately, there was no power employed in his technique to threaten the Galaxy keeper.

Victory could do worse than employ the services of Gary Cole to coach Allsop, and other strikers at the club ,in striking the ball with the laces to generate maximum power.

Matthew Foschini is an up and coming talent but when is the coaching staff at Victory going to encourage him to take players on down the line, rather than continually playing the ball back to his fellow defenders.

It reminds me so much of Luke Wilkshire for the Socceroos who consistently plays the ball back in defence rather than taking players on or playing the wall pass with his teammates.

MATT SIMON FOR SOCCEROOS

Graham Arnold is maintaining the entertaining brand of football which the Mariners produced last season.

It's a team effort but the man who is most consistent is Matt Simon who improves dramatically every season.

Surely if Holger Osieck is looking at A- League players for the Socceroos, Simon should be one of the first considered.

His nonstop running, vastly improved technique and control, shooting power and sharpness in the box make him the ideal striker, so Holger give this man recognition because he won't fail you.

PRAISE THE COMMENTATOR

We all have our opinions about the different commentators representing the networks.

Fox Sports , Adam Peacock, certainly is a standout as he has a great knowledge of the game , superior presentation skills and a strong sense of humour.

The Saturday night program is really professional which should be duplicated by other programs.

FACE IN THE CROWD

Win a Goal! Weekly subscription simply by spotting yourself in the crowd!

GW photgrapher Anita Milas was on hand to capture fans watching the 1-0 win by Melbourne Heart over Wellington Phoenix last weekend in Morwell.

If that's you circled in the picture above, send us a message on our Facebook page or drop us an email at news@goalweekly.com so you can win your prize - it's that easy!

You've got until noon this Wednesday to claim your prize. Good luck!

Robinson's FA Cup run comes to an end

By Peter Simcox

Former Armadale striker James Robinson's English FA Cup run with new club Redbridge has come to an end, after the Isthmian League Division One North league side were beaten 5-0 by League Two leaders Crawley Town on Saturday.

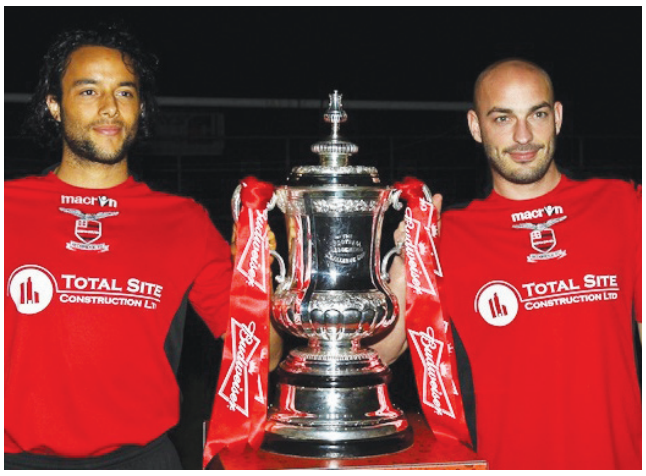
Robinson, who spent two seasons in the Football West Premier League at Alfred Skeet Oval, has enjoyed the media coverage for their cup run and has settled in quick at Oakside. "It's going well for me back in the UK, it's obviously been a bit hectic lately because of this cup run and the press coverage but I'm really enjoying it," said Robinson.

Redbridge reached the 1st Round Proper of the FA Cup for the first time since 2003 after beating Blue Square Premier side Ebbsfleet United 2-0, and in the 1st Round they drew 0-0 with Southern League Premier Division side Oxford City and won the replay 2-1 after extra time, thanks to goals by Nathan Gordon and Ben Bradbury.

"The win at Oxford was well deserved, we showed great character to come from behind to win, but we outplayed them throughout the game so I wasn't that worried when we went behind," explained Robinson.

"We always knew Crawley was going to be tough, they are flying in League Two, and they'll get promoted this year for sure. It was a great atmosphere on Saturday I think there was 2,500 at the ground. We tried hard and we did well for periods of the game, and 5-0 was a harsh score line on us.

"I had a chance to get on the scoresheet, when I latched on to a short back pass and tried to lift it over the keeper, who got something on it and it landed on the roof of the net. Great experience tho, I really enjoyed the atmosphere."



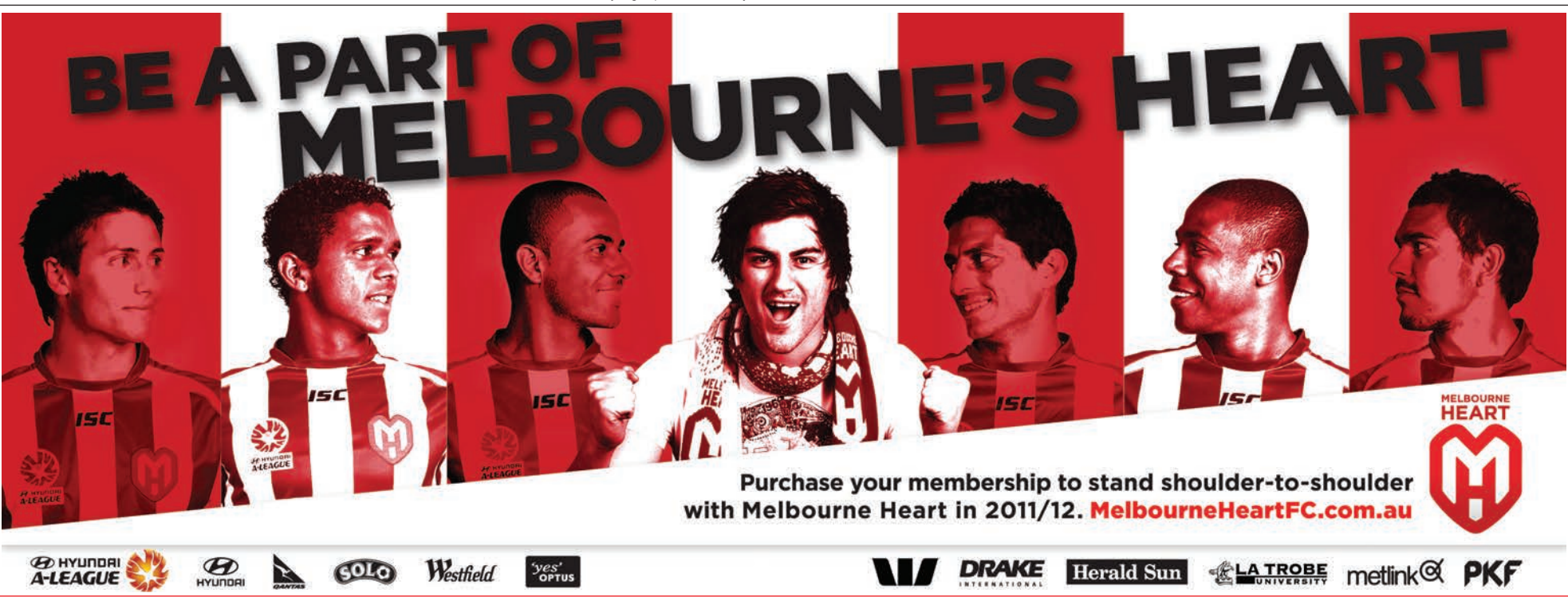
Former Football West Premier League player James Robinson (right), who is the grandson of former Spurs and England striker Jimmy Greaves, with the FA Cup.

The striker, who is the grandson of former Spurs and England striker Jimmy Greaves, took some time off after he left Armadale late last season, but the move to Redbridge was a great opportunity for him. "When I came home I had a month off and then I spoke to my old coach Jody Brown who is the 1st team coach at Redbridge. Having played under him before I knew things would be done at a very high standard so that's what convinced me to join them," explained Robinson.

Greavesy with the cup in 1967.

With the Football West Premier League season getting closer would there be a return down under for Robinson? "I don't think so, certainly not for the upcoming season anyway. I loved my time at Armadale but you have to move on in life, I don't think I could of achieved anything more than I did there. My only disappointment is I didn't get a chance with Glory, not even invited to train with them, I think I did more than enough to get that chance," explained Robinson.

"I wish new coach Lee Bamber well, I hope he does the business at Army, he's a good guy and they deserve success down there."



DAVID BECKHAM

PHOTOS/GRAPHICS: ANITA MILAS

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TSIGAN'S TSIGAR

Tsigan Rolls One Up from the Central Coast!

With Mike Lilikakis

When you hear the name of Σωκράτης, (Socrates) one can conjure up memories and ideals of free speech, as Socrates was a classical Greek Philosopher. Credited as one of the founders of Western Philosophy, he is an enigmatic figure known chiefly through the accounts of later classical writers, especially the writings of his students Plato and Aristotle, and the plays of his contemporary Aristophanes. Many would claim that Plato's dialogues are the most comprehensive accounts of Socrates to survive from antiquity. Long story short, he is a legend beyond compare.

Condemned to death for his beliefs, he refused to flee from his detractors. He believed such a flight would indicate a fear of death, which he believed no true philosopher has. If he fled Athens his teaching would fare no better in another country as he would continue questioning all he met and undoubtedly incur their displeasure. Having knowingly agreed to live under the city's laws, he implicitly subjected himself to the possibility of being accused of crimes by its citizens and judged guilty by its jury. To do otherwise would have caused him to break his 'Social State with the state', and so harm the state, an act contrary to his Socratic principle.

But this diatribe ain't about The Greek dude's life.
So why am I writing about this?
I is the Tsig. Look behind you.

Ask yourself why one of the top 5 Brazilian football players would model himself on a Greek Legend and martyr?
The differerence is why.
What did he represent?

HE was one of football's most iconic stars, a magician on the field and a character off it.

And soccer was this week in mourning after Brazilian legend Socrates died at 57 of a gut ¬infection said to have been sparked by a dodgy stroganoff. The political campaigner and doctor was taken to hospital in Sao Paulo after having a meal with his wife at a hotel. She too fell ill along with a friend.
Tributes flooded in for the midfield genius, who played in two World Cups for Brazil, winning 60 caps and scoring 22 goals. Among the many messages was one from Arsenal's Robin van Persie who tweeted: "RIP Socrates. Legend." Dad-of-six Socrates, who once had booze problems and was a heavy smoker, had been in hospital twice over the summer after suffering bleeds in his digestive tract.

Born in Belem do Para, Socrates started his career at Botafogo. He played for Brazil between 1979 and 1986, captaining the team in 1982, when they were knocked out by Italy. He was part of a squad that was widely considered the greatest team never to win the World Cup.Socrates, who took his medical exams while still playing, was as well known for his political views as much as his talent on the pitch.

He later joined Brazil's fight to overturn a military regime in the 80s. His heroes included Cuban revolution icons Fidel Castro and Che Guevara and John Lennon. Socrates, who rose to prominence with Corinthians, also played for Fiorentina in Italy before returning to Brazil to finish his career. It was the third time in four months that he was hospitalized and placed in intensive care, most recently in September. The first two times he was admitted for a hemorrhage caused by high pressure in the vein that carries blood from the digestive system to the liver.

PROBLEMS? Socrates never denied his fondness for drinking from the time he was a player in the 1980s, but said he stopped drinking earlier this year after his stints in the hospital.

"Socrates seemed like a player from another era," former Italy forward Paolo Rossi told the ANSA news agency. "You couldn't place him in any category - on the pitch and even more so off it. Everyone knew about his degree in medicine and he had a lot of cultural and social interests as well. He was unique from every point of view."

Indeed, Socrates was like no other on and off the field. He became a doctor after retiring from football and later became a popular TV commentator and columnist, always with unique and controversial opinions.Since his playing days, Socrates never kept his political ideas to himself and often wrote about the subject in his columns. Known as Dr. Socrates because of his practice of medicine, he was constantly in demand from local media for interviews on varied subjects. While with Corinthians, Socrates spearheaded a movement called the Corinthians Democracy, in which players protested against the long periods of confinement required by the club before matches. It quickly became a broader protest that coincided with Brazil's fight to overturn a military regime in the 1980s.

The clever, tall full-bearded playmaker also was a member of the Brazilian squad in 1986 in Mexico, but it was in 1982 in Spain that he made history with Brazil, which is known to have had one of the greatest teams in World Cup history but failed to win the trophy. With players like Zico and Falcao, it fell to Italy 3-2 in the second round despite needing only a draw to advance to the semifinals. "He was a very dynamic player with a sublime foot but most of all great intelligence," added Rossi, who scored a memorable hat trick in that match against Brazil. "Along with Zico and Falcao he was the symbol of that Brazil squad. Simon Clifford, the official who brought him to Garforth, tweeted: "Another sad weekend for football with the passing of our friend Socrates, a wonderful player and principled man who stood by his values."

VALUES?
And you get from this....
See below

To this....
See above

The thing is this...how could such an enigma fall from grace?
What did he do that deserved such noteriety?
He looks like a frikkin hobo. Not that hobo's have no rights etc.com

What was he looking for?
Does the quest for achievement or the lack thereof do this to a human?
Why did he end up this way?
Did anyone help him?
When did it all go wrong for him?

Lets cut through the fat with a Ginsu II knife shall we?
Is it any wonder that any legend who has no CORE becomes a bygone?

There are two types of plebs. Doer's and the "Well, I do for you what can you do for me?" plebs.
I hate to say it, but if one lives in regret, there is no hope or salvation.

We, in this football mad laden country of ours have icons.
When they fall from grace we pick them up and dust them off.
When they continue to perform we praise them.
When they slide into the abyss we condemn them.

The issue lies in the ability of plebs to be able to search deep within and leave self, in order to serve others.
When you walk into the next game with expectation of victory and recompense, ask yourself this question.

What have I done for my brother, to keep him from destruction?

I leave this thought with thee, fellow football lover.
Football is either JUST a game, or a WAY of life.
Canst thou have it either way?

As always I remain;
Tsigan FC

Psalm 40.

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Australia v Scotland in World Cup Final!

By Norm Edgar

ALBANIA v AUSTRALIA

The weather was still unseasonably cool for the semi-finals with Albania and Australia playing the first of these.

Albania started off in attacking mood and inside two minutes had the first shot on goal with Dennis Ukalli sending in a cross which Rini Muraqi headed straight at the Australian goalkeeper Bojo Jevdjevic. Albania continued attacking and had another opportunity when Australian midfielder Ben Kasehagen was adjudged to have fouled George Kotsiris just outside the penalty area but the resulting free kick came to nothing. Australia were attacking spasmodically and scored when they received a free kick just outside the penalty area. Slaven Vranesevic took the free kick which the goalkeeper, Zaim Zeneli, appeared to have covered but the ball went through his hands into the goal.

Albania equalised when receiving a free kick again for a tackle just outside the penalty area. The kick which was taken quickly by Ibrahim Ibraimi easily beat the goalkeeper.

Just before half time Australia scored again with a quick break down the left wing. Mason Erdogan passed to Ben Kasehagen who found Sasa Vranesevic who ran onto the ball and with only the goalkeeper to beat scored easily.

The Albanian team tried hard in the second half and did get the ball in the net but it was ruled out for offside. Australia had opportunities late in the game and hit the crossbar with a shot from Sasa Vranesevic.

Australia ran out winners but Albania can consider themselves unlucky

IRELAND V SCOTLAND

In a game between two teams with success in this competition the game was very competitive. Ireland could claim that the game was mainly played in the Scots half but the Scots defence was resolute as they have been all tournament with Craig Elvin, Scott Webster and Steve O'Dor, together with the goalkeeper Stuart Webster, blocking all avenues to goal.

The commitment of both teams was shown in the 15th minute when a tackle between Kieran Fitzgerald and John McCluskie resulted in injury to both players. Fitzgerald was substituted immediately and taken to hospital for treatment. McCluskie carried on for another 15 minutes before going off.

The deciding goal was scored just before half time when a free kick was awarded to Scotland twenty metres from goal. Steve Weir stepped up and his shot cleared the defensive wall and left the goalkeeper Stefaan Sardelic with no chance.

Luke Fitzpatrick in the Irish defence and Alan Kearney in midfield worked tirelessly in the second half to get Ireland back into the game. Mark Leech up forward could not get past the Scots defence despite his best efforts.

Sean McIlroy in the Scots forward line had opportunities but the Irish defence held firm

The game ended with a 1-0 win to Scotland but both teams deserve praise for the spirit in which the game was played.

Semi Final Results
Albania 1-2 Australia
Scotland 1-0 Ireland

The Final
Sunday 11th December
AUSTRALIA V SCOTLAND
KO 3.00
Egan Lee Res. Knox

Benji Vahid (Albania) body check his Australian couterpart.

A well timed tackle by Aleks Prodanovic (Australia) makes things awkwaed for Rini Muriqi (Albania)

Luke Fitzpatrick (Ireland) wins the header against Wayne Gordon (Scotland).

Alan Kearney (Ireland) applies the octopus tackle to Sean McIlroy (Scotland).

The close marking of Jamie Cumming (Scotland) forces Mark Leech (Ireland) to kick the ball high.

Couch Potato Dept.

* ALL TIMES ARE AEDT

SBS

SBS ONE

Sunday December 11th
10:30 AM Football Asia
11:00 AM Les Murray's Football Feature
12:00 PM UEFA Champions League Magazine Program

Monday December 12th
04:30 PM FIFA Futbol Mundial
11:30 PM The World Game

Thursday December 15th
06:45 AM UEFA Europa League - Matchday 6 Live

Friday December 16th
06:45 AM UEFA Europa League - Matchday 6 Live

SBS TWO

Monday December 5th
9:30 PM The World Game

one

Monday 12th December
06:00 am The Serie A Highlights Show

Tuesday 13th December
02:00 am The Serie A Highlights Show
02:30 am Arsenal TV Arsenal V Everton
05:30 am 500 Great Goals
06:00 am Serie A: Inter V Udinese
01:00 pm The Serie A Highlights Show

Wednesday 14th December
03:30 am Serie A Matchday 15
05:30 am FA Cup Classics F.A Cup 6th Round 1994/95 Liverpool V Tottenham Hotspur
06:00 am Liverpool TV Liverpool V Queens Park Rangers

Thursday 15th December
02:30 am Bundesliga: Werder Bremen V Wolfsburg
04:30 am Bundesliga Weekly
05:30 am FA Cup Classics F.A Cup Final 1995/96 Liverpool V Manchester United
06:00 am Serie A: Parma V Palermo
08:00 am Bundesliga Matchday 16: Werder Bremen V Wolfsburg

Friday 16th December
03:30 am Serie A Matchday 15
05:30 am The Serie A Highlights Show

SETANTA SPORTS

Saturday 10-Dec
Bundesliga Round 16 Hertha Berlin v Schalke 9:00am 1st Airing
Primera Division Round 18 Teams TBC 11:10am LIVE
Scottish Premier League Round 18 Hibernian v Rangers 11:25pm LIVE

Sunday 11-Dec
Scottish Premier League Round 18 Celtic v Hearts 1:55am LIVE
Ligue 1 Round 17 Marseille v Bordeaux 6:55am LIVE
Bundesliga Round 16 Hannover v Leverkusen 9:00am 1st Airing
Primera Division Round 18 Teams TBC 11:10am LIVE
Eredivisie Round 16 PSV v NAC 6:30pm 1st Airing
Ligue 1 Round 17 Sochaux v PSG 8:15pm 1st Airing

Monday 12-Dec
Ligue 1 Round 17 Lorient v Lyon 6:55am LIVE
Bundesliga Round 16 Stuttgart v Bayern Munich 9:00am 1st Airing
Primera Division Round 18 Teams TBC 10:45am 1st Airing
Ligue 1 Round 17 Lille v Dijon 12:30pm 1st Airing
Eredivisie Round 16 Waalwijk v Ajax 2:15pm 1st Airing
Scottish Premier League Round 18 St Johnstone v Motherwell
4:00pm 1st Airing Bundesliga Round 16 Dortmund v Kaiserslautern 5:45pm 1st Airing

Tuesday 13-Dec
Eredivisie Round 16 AZ v De Graafschapp 3:15am 1st Airing

Thursday 15-Dec
Copa Sudamericana Final 2nd Leg Teams TBC 11:45am LIVE

FOX SPORTS

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE LIVE
Times listed are 7 minutes prior to kick-offs.

Week 17

Sun Dec 11 Liverpool v QPR	1.53 am
Sun Dec 11 Arsenal v Everton	**1.53 am**
Sun Dec 11 Bolton v Aston Villa	1.53 am
Viewers Choice	
Sun Dec 11 Manchester United v Wolves	
1.53 am Viewers Choice	
Sun Dec 11 Norwich v Newcastle	1.53 am
Viewers Choice	
Sun Dec 11 Swansea v Fulham	**1.53 am**
Viewers Choice	
Sun Dec 11 West Brom v Wigan	10.30 am
DELAY	
Mon Dec 12 S'land v Blackburn	**12.23 am**
Mon Dec 12 Stoke v Tottenham	2.53 am
Tue Dec 13 Chelsea v Man City	**6.53 am**

ENGLISH FOOTBALL LEAGUE LIVE

Sat Dec 3 Crystal Palace v Derby	6.30 am
Sat Dec 4 Bristol City v Middlesbrough	4.00 am

A-LEAGUE LIVE

Fri Dec 9 Brisbane v Melb Heart	7.30 pm
Sat Dec 10 Wellington v Perth	**3.00 pm**
Sat Dec 10 Central Coast v Newcastle	5.30 pm
Sat Dec 10 Victory v Adelaide Utd	**7.45 pm**
Sun Dec 11 Gold Coast v Sydney	4.30 pm

31 tv now!

The Futbol Town Show
Every Tuesday 7pm

Extra Time
Magazine Show
Every Tuesday 7.30pm

SMFC TV
Channel 31
Every Wed 7pm

The Green Gully Football Show
Every Saturday 10.30am

Alvaro Rodriguez's

Planet Football

No.004 Mozambique

NAME: Mozambique
CAPITAL: Maputo
POPULATION: (2009 approx.) 22,894,000
CONFEDERATION: CAF
FIFA WORLD RANKING: 105th

WHO ARE YA?
The Republic of Mozambique is situated in southeast Africa, facing the Indian Ocean. Inhabited for centuries by Bantus and Swahilis.
The land was annexed first by Arab traders in the Middle Ages and later by the Portuguese in the early 1500s, making the new colony an important commercial centre - Portuguese ships circumnavigating Africa (something that had only been recently achieved) en route to the New World stopped at the ports constructed there.

Though spices, gold and other minerals were the chief items of trade, cruelly this also included 'natives' sold into slavery across the imperial sphere. Even when slavery was rightfully abolished centuries later, the land still remained a key cog in Portugal's African possessions.

As it was, 'Portuguese East Africa' and its port capital Lourenço Marques were the recipients of very little political autonomy as the 1970s began, by which time the raging guerrilla conflict between Portuguese loyalists and a plethora of independence movements (most notably the Communist FRELIMO) had endured for nearly 10 years, with final victory not coming until 1975, when the now-sovereign colony renamed itself Mozambique, and its capital Maputo.

Independence was no picnic however - FRELIMO were intent on turning the country into a stereotypical Marxist police-state, which gave rise to a new conflict - this time with 'supposed' pro-democracy(in fact right-wing nationalists) opposition group RENAMO, which was backed by the apartheid regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia(later Zimbabwe) due to FRELIMO's suspected collaborating with anti-apartheid movements such as Nelson Mandela's African National Congress.

The 1990s ushered in a new era of détente which soon gave way to the conflict's end as well as that of the Communist state - rival political parties were formed and the nation switched to multi-party capitalist democracy.

The incomparable Eusébio...Portuguese via Mozambique!

SO WHAT YOU DONE?
Football has always been the main team sport in Mozambique, and even before independence in 1975 it already had a few footballing claims to fame: in 1969, Lourenço Marques played host to the World Cup qualifying series between Australia and Rhodesia, which saw the Johnny Warren-led Socceroos progress to the last tie against Israel.

Not to mention the Aussies' stuff-up in enlisting the help of the witch-doctor who would go on to curse Australian football for the next 30+ years until John Safran intervened...
But moreso than that, the simple fact of Portuguese East Africa/Mozambique being the birthplace of one of world football's true immortals: Eusébio!

The Portugal and Benfica legend was born in Lourenço Marques/Maputo in 1942, joining the red half of Lisbon in 1960 despite the fact his club back home, Grupo Desportivo was a feeder club for Benfica's arch-foes Sporting Lisbon.

Despite this, Benfica were able to hang on to their new signing and well, the rest is history...

Due to most Portuguese colonies not being permitted to field teams in international sporting competition, Mozambique had to wait until after independence to make their debut in world football - a 2-1 loss to Tanzania in 1977.

They entered World Cup qualifying for the first time for Spain '82, without success and are still yet to make it. Thus the few successes Mozambican football has to its own name are qualifying for 4 African Nations Cups (1986, 1996, 1998 and 2010).

BIG CLUBS
Grupo Desportivo de Maputo, the club that gave Eusébio to the world is one of the country's iconic clubs due to its reputation, although crosstown rivals C.D. Costa do Sol boast a bigger trophy cabinet: 9 Moçambola(the nation's top-flight) titles, 10 cups as well as several appearances in the African Champions League, Cup-Winners' Cup and other continental competitions.

The country's other super-clubs are Clube Ferroviário de Maputo and C.D. Maxaquene, boasting some 30 league titles and cups combined between them, as well as multiple appearances in continental competition themselves. Despite this, no Mozambican club has ever won a continental title.

Just in case the GPS ain't working...

REP YOUR COLORS
Known as the Black Mambas, the Mozambican NT plays in red shirts, black shorts and socks(similar to fellow Portuguese-speakers and Germany '06 qualifiers Angola), with the away substituting red for a dirty-fluoro yellow.

MATCHWINNERS
Eusébio aside, these are the guys who actually play/ed for Mozambique: midfielder Jojó juggled 77 caps for his country between 1989-2003 with a club career that took him from Costa do Sol to Portugal, where he turned out for Boavista, U.D. Leiria and Belenenses(among others) before ending his playing days here in Oz, with the Bonnyrigg White Eagles in the NSW Super League.

Much-travelled striker Chiquinho Conde turned out for Belenenses, Braga, Vitória Setúbal and Sporting Lisbon before leaving Portugal for the US, where he played for New England Revolution and Tampa Bay Mutiny in the MLS' early years.

In more recent times, right-back Campira had stints at Lokomotiv Moscow's reserves and Dinamo Zagreb before returning home; current national skipper Dário Monteiro had a stint with the UAE's Al-Jazira (current home of Lucas Neill) in 2003-04; and defensive-mid Simão Mate Junior plies his trade for Greek giants Panathinaikos.

Left-back Paíto currently turns out for Swiss side Neuchâtel Xamax after stints with Sporting Lisbon and Braga in Portugal, Mallorca in Spain and FC Sion upon arriving in Switzerland.

Other Mozambicans who turned out for Portugal include left-back Hilário, who along with dual-compatriot Eusébio steered Portugal towards bronze at England '66 and more recently, crazy-haired defender Abel Xavier who turned out for clubs as diverse as Benfica, Bari, Real Oviedo and Liverpool among others before ending his career with the LA Galaxy in 2008, notching 20 caps for Portugal along the way.

SO WHAT NOW?
Having lost out on a 2012 African Nations Cup place to Zambia and the resurgent Libya, the Black Mambas turn their attention to qualifying for Brazil 2014.
But with continental power Egypt, Guinea and Zimbabwe in their way, it looks to be a tricky passage to the World Cup, particularly as only group winners progress to the third round of qualifying.

With the second-round groups not beginning till June 2012 however, it's up to the Mambas to prepare and plan for what lies ahead.

HOT: Gee, where to start? First up the Roar break the domestic Australian sporting record for longest-unbeaten streak, only for it to end the following week against Sydney FC; and Beckham-mania hit Melbourne for the friendly between his LA Galaxy side and the Victory at Etihad (with the retractable seating used too!). Despite criticism of these exhibition matches by the purists(and make no mistake, it's usually justified), we should take into account that as far as positive promotion for the game here goes, this was invaluable - the aim thus is to retain as many of the 'theatre-goers' as possible and turn them into fans. As for Becks himself, he showed again just why he is a great ambassador for our game, conducting himself like a champion off the pitch as much as on it. But Victory-wise, the big plus for me was the performance of young No. 27, Paulo Retre. A lesser kid would have wilted in the face of the occasion but he held his nerve and treated us to the kind of ball control and pace that has been sorely absent from the Victory's play this season. True that he missed his penalty kick later on, but this kid has - should have - a potentially-big role to play in the squad; young James Jeggo also held his own quite well I thought. My advice to Mem: pick these kids in the starting XI and keep them there, nurture them b/c they definitely have something good to offer!

NOT: It has also been a few sad weeks in the football fraternity, first with Socceroo keeper Brad Jones' son Luca passing on and then Welsh legend Gary Speed's own death; sadly now Brazilian icon Socrates, one of the legendary Spain '82 squad 'the best side to never win a World Cup' depending who you talk to, has also passed away. RIP to all; we shall never forget.

The World Game in the USA

BLAST FROM THE PAST

With Roy Hay

Shootin' it Stateside

Bruce Arena, David Beckham's coach at Los Angeles Galaxy, was very upbeat about the Major League Soccer in the United States claiming that it was going onwards and upwards when many of the other indices in that country were heading in the other direction. But Arena will remember that there were previous episodes in the long history of football in the United States when it seemed that it might make a significant impact on the sporting landscape.

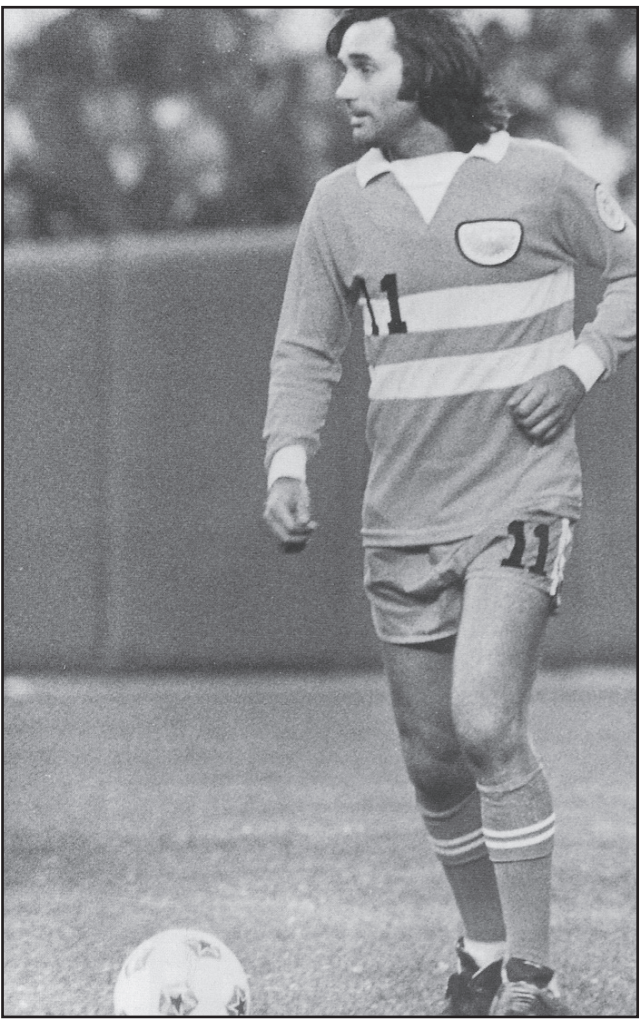
In the nineteenth century there were various forms of football being played in that country as there were in the United Kingdom and Australia. There was an early flourish among some colleges in the north-east, but then working class immigrants with some business support took over the game in the 1880s. As with Australia the game tended to rise and fall with waves of migration, with distance a major handicap to the formation of real national competitions. The American Soccer League of the 1920s was a competitive and impressive body, but despite its title it was really a north-eastern regional competition. After the Second World War, the United States national team caused a major upset by defeating England one-nil in the World Cup in 1950 in Brazil, but it was not till the 1960s that interest in the game grew to the point that another national league could be attempted. Bill Cox attracted a number of top European teams to play matches during their summer off-season along with a domestic all-stars outfit.

Then in 1968 two competing leagues merged to form the North American Soccer League (NASL) and it flourished for a few years before coming to an end in 1984. This time the clubs were American but the players were attracted from round the world, including a number of the stars of the day, usually, though not always, when they were approaching the end of their careers. So Pele, George Best, Rodney Marsh, Charlie Cooke, Giorgio Chinaglia, Carlos Alberto, Franz Beckenbauer, Johan Cruyff, Eusebio, Gerd Müller, Denis Tueart and many lesser lights spent several years boosting the sport and enjoying rewards which were significantly better than they could have obtained in Europe and the United Kingdom. The popularity of the game peaked in 1977 when the New York Cosmos and Fort Lauderdale Strikers drew nearly 78,000 fans to Giants' Stadium. But the league had major problems. It lacked national television exposure, it played fast and loose with FIFA regulations and it had little or no grass roots development. The American members of the rosters tended to be there to make up the numbers and the national team struggled to make an impact as a result. Nevertheless seeing the superstars in the flesh helped give many youngsters an idea of what was possible in the game.

George Best weaved his magic with Los Angeles Aztecs from 1976 through June 1978 with his great mate Bobby McAlinden, who did a lot of the midfield grafting for Charlie Cooke, Ron Davies and Best. They reached the play-offs that first season. Best scored 15 goals in 23 games. The Aztecs made the play-offs again in 1977 but then he was dropped and transferred to Fort Lauderdale Strikers. In his first match with the new club he scored as the Strikers beat Cosmos 5–3 their first victory over the NASL champions. It was while at the Aztecs that he and McAlinden bought a run down hotel called Hard Times and turned it into Bestie's Bar, where my wife and I had a meal with Bobby McAlinden on a visit to the States in 1991. We also watched Australia beat England in the final of the rugby World Cup that year on one of the 47 television screens filling the walls of the establishment and serviced by huge satellite dishes on the flat roof.

The NASL folded but a relatively high quality indoor soccer league succeeded it and the women's game began to grow into the dominant sport for females, something to which the male version could not even aspire. Title IX, a federal ordinance, which mandated equal provision for male and female athletes in the college system, underpinned the growth of the women's game. Mothers seeing the horrendous rate of injury in the American code of football and ice hockey were keen for their children to play a less violent on-field game and so the phenomenon of the 'soccer mom' appeared.

In 1994 the United States hosted the World Cup for the first time. Great fears prior to the tournament that the USA would distort the game by trying to impose some of the innovations which had been adopted in the NASL days proved to be misplaced. The tournament drew huge attendances to excellent stadia and though the final was goal-less and had to be decided by a penalty shoot-out and Colombian player Andreas Escobar was murdered after conceding an own goal in the loss to the USA the experience was otherwise very positive. Pele returned to appear at the closing ceremony in Los Angeles with Whitney Houston and two Australian linesmen, Eugene Brazzale and Gordon Dunster officiated at the opening game in Chicago.



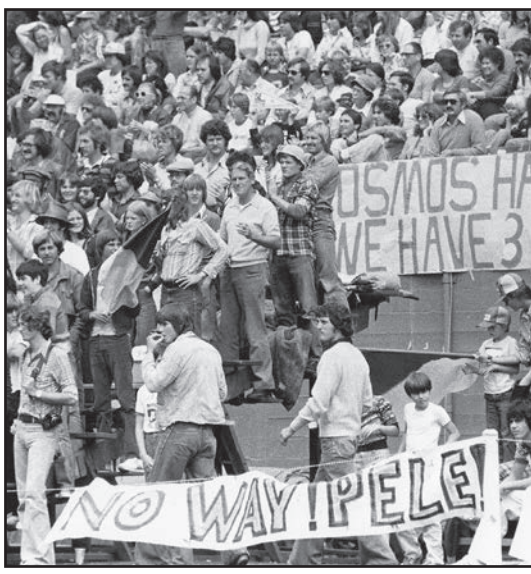
George Best with Los Angeles Aztecs in 1976. Photo: Colorsport. In Joe Lovejoy, Bestie: Portrait of a Legend, facing page 246.

Cosmos line-up against Victoria in 1982, from left, Chinaglia, Birkenmeier, Beckenbauer, Durgan, Romero, Davis, Gee, Kapp, Neeskens, Cabanas, Bogicevic. Photo: Les Shorrock. Les Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library.

Pele and Whitney Houston at the closing ceremony of the World Cup in 1994. Photo: Dominic Impiombata.

Bobby McAlinden with Frances and Roy Hay outside Bestie's Bar in Hermosa Beach, Los Angeles in 1991.

An outside view of Bestie's Bar complete with satellite dish on the roof to feed the 47 TV sets inside the premises.



Crowd scene USA with banners. Soccer Bowl 1977. Photo: Julian Baum, PO Box 6170, Beverley Hills CA 90212 (213) 821-5871

Roar surrender pole position to Heart

By Daniel Quinn

The experience of Chris Payne (9) was too much for Victory Youth as the Jets ran out 2-1 winners. Photo: BEN NEVILLE

Payne brace takes the points

Newcastle Jets has defeated Melbourne Victory 2-1 on Sunday at Adamstown Oval thanks to a brace from Chris Payne.

Newcastle had the early chances through Nick Cowburn and Ali Abbas. Cowburn's volley took a deflection of Nick Ansell and lucky for Victory it missed the goal. Abbas shot from the edge of the box but it well over.

Paulo Retre was the next Victory defender to get in the way when he blocked an optimistic volley by David Talesvski.

Just before half-time Victory forward Luke O'Dea could have grabbed the lead but after receiving the ball from Chris Cristaldo but his shot was saved by Jack Duncan.

Only two minutes into the second-half Chris Payne opened the scoring. The forward got past two defenders before finishing in the bottom far corner.

Directly after the restart Victory could have equalised through Melvin Beckett but his curling attempt went narrowly wide of the far post.

But despite Victory's attempt at a comeback Newcastle extended their lead with Chris Payne scoring a wonderful free-kick inside the far post.

However Victory did make a comeback through Jimmy Jeggo. Young forward Cristaldo crossed into O'Dea whose shot was saved and Jeggo was there to fire home from 10 metres out.

Just before full-time they could have snatched a late equaliser but as Hernan Espindola rounded Duncan in goal his shot was saved off the line Regan. O'Dea then fired the follow up attempt over from 10 metres out.

Chris Payne could have earned himself a hat-trick late on but his shot was saved by Victory 'keeper Lawrence Thomas. Kale Bradbery then fired the follow up over the bar.

Melbourne Victory Assistant Coach Vaughan Coveny thought the performance of his team was encouraging. "It was encouraging. We got off to a slow start and obviously they had a few overage players who had A-League experience playing down. It was a good first-half then in the second-half they scored pretty much after half-time and scored a pretty good free-kick and we were down 2-0. But we got a bit of a second wind and got back into the game and towards the last twenty minutes I thought we were on top and we could have snatched something so it was a good improvement. "

Comfortable win for Heart

Melbourne Heart has defeated The AIS 2-0 on Saturday at AIS Athletics Track thanks to an own goal and a David Williams strike.

AIS had the first chances as Daniel Barac set up Stefan Mauk but his powerful shot was saved by Thomas Dunn.

Despite AIS' earlier chance it was Heart who opened the scoring on 13 minutes when Kristian Sarkies' free-kick was headed into his own net by Mitchell Oxborrow.

On 23 minutes Heart double their lead after Dusan Bosnjak's cross was volleyed home by David Williams.

Sarkies with his brilliant free-kick taking caused more havoc as Paul Izzo had to tip over his bar.

Half way through the second-half AIS could have grabbed a goal back through Anthony Proia and Jacob Melling. However Proia's flick went across the face of goal before Melling's shot narrowly missed.

Daniel Barac then had an attempt but it was well saved by Dunn in goal.

That win moves Heart to the top of the table.

Thriller at Leichhardt Oval

Sydney FC and Brisbane Roar played out a thrilling 4-4 draw at Leichhardt Oval on Saturday.

The goal scoring was opened on 15 minutes as Blake Powell shot through 'keeper Matt Acton.

Only seven minutes later Rocco Visconte equalised when he pushed home a deflected effort.

As the game was nearing half-time Hirofumi Moriyasu and Powell both could have grabbed the lead back but they were denied.

Five minutes after the break Sydney had the lead back through Mitchell Mallia who finished easily passed Acton.

However only six minutes later Brisbane equalised through Visconte to make it 2-2; Tomislav Mijic pushed Brandon Borrello to concede a penalty which was smashed home by Visconte.

One minute later Brisbane was remarkably in front through Nicholas Fitzgerald. The forward's finish on the edge of the box had too much on it for Marko Bozic in goal.

However Sydney equalised through Jared Lum on 66 minutes. Mallia was fouled in the box before Lum calmly put away the penalty.

And only five minutes later Sydney had the lead through Mallia. The inform forward was sent onto goal and finished comfortably to make it 4-3.

R oar had the next best chance but Christopher Naumoff cleared off the goal line for the hosts.

But Roar did equalise on 88 minutes through Tomislav Cirjak as he poked home Fitzgerald's fantastic built-up play.

Mariners back in the winning circle

Central Coast Mariners are back in the winning circle after defeating Adelaide 2-0 at Burton Park on Saturday.

Adelaide created the first chance on 13 minutes when Jake Monaco chipped a through ball to Joe Costa whose header was punched clear by Justin Pasfield.

Three minutes later Mariners striker Mitchell Duke created their first chance with a brilliant flick over his own head and two defenders. His follow up strike however was saved by Mark Birighitti.

The next chance to open the scoring came on 24 minutes when Teeboy Kamara rounded Justin Pasfield in goals but his shot was cleared off the line.

Three minutes later Duke again was involved as his attempt was saved at the near post by Birighitti. Kwabena Appiah-kubi's follow-up effort was then cleared.

On 49 minutes Brad McDonald went close but Birighitti was in fine form to deny the winger.

On 60 minutes the infamous Antony Golec should have opened the scoring but his header bounced into the ground and over the bar after a great free-kick by Liam Wooding.

Six minutes later that miss would bite them on the behind as Trent Sainsbury finished into the far corner off the post.

On 70 minutes Justin Hayward had a long range shot parried and the midfielder failed to finish the follow-up effort.

However five minutes later Hayward did make 2-0 after being played in by Zachary Freeburn.

Adriano Pellegrino could have extended the lead even further but his shot was popped over with an open goal glaring at him.

Makeche strike secures the three points

Perth Glory has defeated Gold Coast United 1-0 on Sunday at 6PR Stadium thanks to a late Makeche strike.

Former Gold Coast utility man Steve Pantelidis could have opened the scoring early on but his poor finish went wide from close range.

Only seconds later Chris Harold's strike sailed over from 10 metres out. Not long later Harold had a chance to make up for the miss but Lewis Italiano saved well before denying Mitch Cooper's follow-up.

On 17 minutes Mitch Cooper tested Italiano again as the young 'keeper dived well to save.

Not long before the break Captain Reece Vittiglia smashed the post with a brilliant free-kick.

After the break Byron Hudson hit the crossbar for Glory before Tommy Amphlett and Jesse Makarounas too had chances.

Glory did finally open the scoring on 78 minutes through Ndumba Makeche who comfortably finished from an acute angle.

Results

AIS 0:2 Melbourne Heart FC
Sydney FC 4:4 Brisbane Roar
Adelaide United 0:2 CC Mariners
Perth Glory FC 1:0 Gold Coast United
Newcastle Jets FC 2:1 Melb Victory

NYL Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	P
1 Melbourne Heart	7	5	0	2	13	10	3	15
2 Brisbane Roar	7	4	2	1	23	15	8	14
3 Perth Glory	7	4	2	1	15	12	3	14
4 CC Mariners	7	4	1	2	16	7	9	13
5 Sydney FC	7	3	2	2	22	14	8	11
6 Newcastle Jets	7	3	2	2	16	14	2	11
7 Gold Coast United	7	3	0	4	11	12	-1	9
8 AIS	6	2	0	4	10	13	-13	6
9 Adelaide United	7	1	1	5	7	17	-10	4
10 Melbourne Victory	6	0	0	6	4	22	-18	0

Next Round

Sat 10 Dec 11 3:00pm
Gold Coast United FC Vs Sydney FC
Owen Park, Southport

Sat 10 Dec 11 4:00pm
AIS Vs Newcastle Jets
AIS Athletics Track, Canberra

Sun 11 Dec 11 10:00am
Perth Glory Vs Central Coast Mariners
6PR Stadium, Inglewood

Sun 11 Dec 11 2:30pm
Melbourne Victory Vs Adelaide United
Kingston Heath, Cheltenham

Sun 11 Dec 11 3:00pm
Brisbane Roar Vs Melbourne Heart
Cleveland Showgrounds, Cleveland

Victory kepper Lawrence Thomas thwarts a Newcastle United attack. Photo: BEN NEVILLE

Jets keeper Jack Duncan spreads himself like a cat to deny Victory's Hernan Espindola. Photo: BEN NEVILLE

Sydney FC make history with 11 goal rout

By FFA

Sydney FC have dealt the Westfield W-League an ominous warning after a record-breaking 11-0 victory against Perth Glory.

A remarkable nine second-half goals saw the Sky Blues demolish the existing record scoreline of 7-1 achieved by Newcastle Jets last season against Adelaide United.

The win took Sydney to within three points of Canberra United as the leaders narrowly failed to collect all three points in drawing 2-2 on the road in Brisbane.

Meanwhile, in an equally pivotal match, Melbourne Victory put a three-point margin between themselves and fellow top-four aspirants Newcastle Jets with a 2-1 win over their rivals in Geelong.

The Week 7 results set up a fascinating and potentially season-defining contest next Saturday as Canberra host Sydney, where victory for the home side will virtually sew up the premiership.

Much of the weekend focus though was grabbed by Sydney who were unrelenting in attack, scoring a remarkable five goals in a 15-minute period immediately after half-time.

Renee Rollason, Kylie Ledbrook and Leena Khamis all scored trebles, while Kyah Simon, on her long-awaited return from injury, bagged a goal during injury time.

Such is Sydney's depth in attack, Simon and fellow Westfield Matildas striker Sarah Walsh started on the bench while AFC Young Player of the Year Caitlin Foord was subbed off after an hour.

Desperate defending by Canberra thwarts a Brisbane attack. Photo: KEITH EIGELAND

In Brisbane, the Roar lost touch with their long-term rivals, falling two points behind the Sky Blues, after their draw against the visiting Canberra.

The team from the nation's capital came close to maintaining a perfect record of six wins from as many starts only to unluckily concede an own goal with just two minutes remaining.

The two teams traded early goals through Joanne Burgess for the Roar and a Sally Shipard penalty for United.

The visitors then took the lead for the first time through competition leading scorer Michelle Heyman, before Ellie Brush put through her own net to ensure the spoils were shared.

An equally crucial match-up took place in Geelong where home side Melbourne Victory scored a comeback win as Jodie Taylor scored in each half.

Jets ace Lisa De Vanna was largely well handled by the Victory defence, with the visitors hamstrung by the absence of midfield creator Emily van Egmond because of injury.

Earlier Nicole Bolger put the Jets in front but it was to be an unhappy return for goalkeeper Melissa Barbieri on her first return to her hometown state.

Results

Melbourne Victory 2 (Jodie Taylor 40, 65)
Newcastle Jets 1 (Nicole Bolger 36)

Brisbane Roar 2 (Joanne Burgess 7, Ellie Brush own goal 88)
Canberra United 2 (Sally Shipard 9, Michelle Heyman 78)

Sydney FC 11 (Renee Rollason 24, 42, 50, Kylie Ledbrook 47, 78, 87, Tanya Oxtoby 58og, Leena Khamis 59, 60, 75, Kyah Simon 93)
Perth Glory 0

Bye: Adelaide United

Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	P
1 Canberra United FC	6	5	1	0	15	7	8	16
2 Sydney FC	6	4	1	1	22	5	17	13
3 Brisbane Roar	6	3	2	1	13	5	8	11
4 Melbourne Victory	6	3	0	3	10	6	4	9
5 Newcastle Jets	5	2	0	3	9	11	-2	6
6 Perth Glory	5	1	0	3	6	22	-16	3
7 Adelaide United	6	0	0	6	4	19	-15	0

Next Round

Sat 10 Dec 11 2:00pm
Brisbane Roar Vs Adelaide United FC
Stockland Park, Sunshine Coast

Sat 10 Dec 11 4:00pm
Perth Glory Vs Melbourne Victory
6PR Stadium, Inglewood

Sat 10 Dec 11 5:00pm
Canberra United Vs Sydney FC
Deakin Football Stadium, Canberra

Newcastle Jets Vs Bye

Jodie Taylor has just put Victory in front. Her opponent Alex Huynh (Jets) screams in frustration. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

Opposing captains do battle ... Ariane Hingst (Jets) shows the better judgment against Jodie Taylor (Victory). Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

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V-LEAGUE

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Round Six

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Title contenders keep their distance

By Adam Husseini

Round six was just as unpredictable as the previous five rounds with only a young Jimmy Soufis tipping all 6 games correctly! The title contenders NM & PV maintained their 6 point lead at the top with Mickleham & Fitzroy amongst the movers and shakers in the ladder. The season is heating up in the run in towards Christmas.

Metro's Tomo Grgic and Pascoe Vale's Adam Husseini battle for the ball late in the game.

Prahran's Cameron Holmes misses a late chance against Essendon.

FC Richmond 5 vs 11 Nth Melb FC

The champions opened the card with an 11-5 slapping of newly promoted Richmond. North welcomed back Shayan Alinejad from exile with a coolly taken three goals, best and fairest Jonathan Barrientos also slotted three for the futsal juggernaut and brother Jason kicked a solitary. North lead 6-3 at halftime but Richmond was never a chance; they were too slow and simply not good enough. Mirza Pedic kicked a double for North with solitaries to Mu & Jankovic rounding off the tally. Tony Massinde kicked a double for Richmond with solitaries to Alghorabi, Zaio & Odisho summarizing Richmond's goal kickers. Richmond's woes don't get any better with Prahran at 10:15pm next week & North take on a depleted Brunswick at 8:45pm.

Metropolitan 6 vs 9 Pascoe Vale FC

These two sides have fought for titles & cups in classic encounters but this was far from that. Pascoe Vale skipping to a 6-1 lead at half time without stars Azzam, Burton & Rasoulzadeh! Metropolitan were only missing Spijodic through suspension but took an eternity to get out of the blocks. Once they did though they made a game of it in the second half and came within two goals. A red card to striker Alexander Stevanovic slowed Metro's progress and Pascoe won comfortably in the end. Da Silva scored five, Simsek (2), Polatti (1) & Caro (1) summed up the PV goalscorers and for MFC Dino Redzepovic (2), Alia Redzepovic (1), Avdic (1) & Grgic (1). Pascoe Vale take on outdoor superstars Mickleham FC at 8pm next week, Metro desperately need points against Fitzroy at 7:15pm.

FC Balwyn 2 vs 3 Fitzroy FC

The third clash of the night saw two teams that rely on their physical strengths try and outmuscle each other. Fitzroy led by Manny Karras hustled and bustled early to snatch a 2-0 lead before Balwyn forced a late goal for 2-1. The second half was much the same as the first, Karras had new inclusions Lammanda and Verakakis who did well but succumbed to another goal late in the half. Fitzroy hung onto a 3-2 lead desperately with goal keeper Greg Lascaris saving numerous shots. Blackburn was unusually quiet for Fitzroy and so was Vithoulkas. Balwyn did fantastically well given four of their starting lineup missed the clash due to injuries, suspension and other commitments. Balwyn battle Ashburton next week trying to stem the tide of losses since their promising start to the season. Fitzroy take on Metro in a crunch mid table match at 7:15pm.

Brunswick 2 vs 9 Mickleham FC

The outdoor superstars Mickleham banished friends and foe in CF Brunswick to a 9-2 loss.

Highly fancied Brunswick were missing many and the players they fielded all looked to be hampered by injury and fatigue. With only one substitute on the bench they tired quickly and were a demoralizing 5-1 down at half time. Jamie Tran was in fine form in the Mickleham goal saving plenty, kicking the goals for his side were the Colossimo brothers who both bagged doubles, alongside Iuliano with singles to Najdovski and Nguyen. Brunswick had solitaries to Huyn & Marusic and will need to recruit heavily. 22 rounds can be a daunting task for any squad, North Melbourne & Pascoe Vale both have countless subs and squad options Brunswick need the same. They need to bounce back fast as they have the champions next week, and it doesn't get any easier for mickleham with runners up Pascoe Vale looking to steal all three points from them at the prime time of 8pm next week. This will be the last game for both North & Pascoe with the majority of players in preparation for the national Championships in January.

FC Prahran 7 vs 5 FC Essendon

FC Prahran continues to offer the only competition to champions North Melbourne & Pascoe Vale as they collected another vital three points against FC Essendon.

Stat man felt Essendon were unlucky to lose however the former review man insisted Prahran were always going to win. Avram kicked four goals for his dearly beloved team with singles to Barbosa, Holmes & Tran. Essendon had five individual goal kickers in Zoric, Filipovic, Nabbout, Kovacevic & newly included Lucas Johns. Prahran looked the goods throughout and they're formidable list could prove the only title shake up as both North and Pascoe sit on 6 out of 6 wins. Essendon take on Brimbank in the opening game of next week's card looking to get back to winning ways.

Ashburton FC 5 vs 3 Brimbank

The last game of the night was a tense affair with newly promoted Brimbank taking on the green machine. Ashburton, managed fantastically well by Maurice Cristiano went into the break 1-1 but went on to win 5-3. Rodrigo 'Para' Evangelista scored a double, as did McCeileh with Correa scoring the single. Arin Messinovic copped two yellow cards for Brimbank and saw red, Adem Alicevic, Admir Kablar and Emir Emeti scored singles for Brimbank. Brimbank are the same old story with great efforts and valiant battles but just can't register the points on the board. Brimbank need to get back to winning ways fast, they have the big derby against Essendon at 6:30pm next week. Ashburton will look to take another three hard fought points off Balywn at 9:30pm next week,

Ashburton's Leo Correa has been a major factor in his side's amazing rise up the ladder.

V-League Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Pascoe Vale FC	6	6	0	0	50	19	31	18
2 North Melbourne FC	6	6	0	0	39	16	23	18
3 FC Prahran	6	4	0	2	39	23	16	12
4 Mickleham FC	6	3	1	2	38	30	8	10
5 Ashburton FC	6	3	1	2	32	31	1	10
6 FC Essendon	6	3	0	3	36	36	0	9
7 Fitzroy FC	6	3	0	3	26	31	-5	9
8 FC Balwyn	6	3	0	3	25	32	-7	9
9 CF Brunswick	6	2	0	4	28	41	-13	6
10 Metropolitan FC	6	1	0	5	35	43	-8	3
11 Brimbank FC	6	0	1	5	20	39	-19	1
12 FC Richmond	6	0	1	5	23	50	-27	1

Round 6 RESULTS Wed 7th Dec

- 6:30 FC Richmond v North Melbourne FC 5 - 11
- 7:15 Metropolitan FC v Pascoe Vale FC 6 - 9
- 8:00 FC Balwyn v Fitzroy FC 2 - 3
- 8:45 CF Brunswick v Mickleham FC 2 - 9
- 9:30 FC Essendon v FC Prahran 5 - 7
- 10:15 Ashburton FC v Brimbank FC 5 - 3

Round 7 CLASHES Wed 14th Dec

- 6:30 FC Essendon v Brimbank FC
- 7:15 Metropolitan FC v Fitzroy FC
- 8:00 Mickleham FC v Pascoe Vale FC
- 8:45 CF Brunswick v North Melbourne FC
- 9:30 FC Balwyn v Ashburton FC
- 10:15 FC Richmond v FC Prahran

Top Goal Scorers

1. A. Nabbout FCE	17
2. M. Avram FCP	16
3. J. Da Silva PVFC	16
4. Jason. Barrientos NMFC	10

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Photos By
JIMMY SOUFIS

NACIONAL, CORINTHIANS AND BOCA JUNIORS ARE CAMPEONES!

Latin Wrap

Francis **Fields**

Corinthians fans "Gavioes da Fiel" in raptures and paying tribute to the legendary Socrates, himself a former Corinthians icon.

Dale campeón, dale campeón! Álvaro Recoba finally wins a domestic Uruguayan title with Nacional de Montevideo after a long stint abroad.

Recoba the hero

Nacional of Montevideo have won the Uruguayan Apertura earlier in the week in an agonising 1-0 victory over Liverpool thanks to a solitary late winner by prolific forward Álvaro Recoba at the Centenario stadium for its 43rd title.

The win shall be fondly remembered by its fans as one of the best comebacks in the season. Recoba crowns himself as the latest idol for the club and winding down his career at his beloved club.

With the win, Nacional progresses for the Uruguayan play off final. It was a neck-and-neck affair with Danubio also playing at the same time and vying for the title.

Álvaro Recoba entered the pitch at half-time and changed Nacional's fate. It was a tough second half for Nacional but a magical left foot drive was it all took.

Nacional have managed to leave behind their battled and bruised loss to Bella Vista in the Uruguayan championship along with their elimination in the Copa Sudamericana to Universidad de Chile.

Of the last 24 points, Nacional won 22 leaving its most fierce rival out of the running, beating Peñarol in the derby as well with ten men earlier in the season.

Coach Marcelo Gallardo - himself a legendary former player with River Plate was delighted with the win and the form his team carried out during the season defying all odds.

Picking up the ball from outside the box and following up a faigning dummy, his left footed shot was nailed in the top corner initiating wild scenes with the Nacional fans.

The late Socrates an inspiration

In more dramatic circumstances, Corinthians also grabbed their title early Monday. It was the last day of Brazilian championship action, as Corinthians drew a goalless 0-0 draw to Palmeiras, it's most classic of city rivals.

The São Paulo-based club may have possibly been inspired from club legend Socrates' death earlier in the day as fans paid respect and tribute.

Corinthians only needed a point to seal the championship against fellow city rivals Palmeiras. The other hot-contested match between league runners Vasco da Gama and Flamengo in the Rio de Janeiro derby ended 1-1.

It was also the most important match of the season coinciding in the last round.

The 'Timão' as Corinthians are fondly referred to have been celebrating this week after the draw at the Pacaembú stadium as fans were seen raptured into wild celebrations.

As soon as the other match between Vasco da Gama and Flamengo finished 1-1, the Corinthians faithful began celebrating letting the players know on the pitch that they were to be crowned champions.

Boca in a festival

In Argentina, Boca Juniors won the Argentine league title with two matches to spare beating Banfield 3-0 at a boisterious and chanting La Bombonera stadium last Monday morning, Australian eastern time.

Boca, unbeaten in 27 matches going back to last season, have 39 points from 17 matches in the Apertura championship.

Second-placed Racing Club were 11 points behind after Saturday's 2-0 win at Colón in Santa Fe and third-placed Tigre 12 points adrift before their match at San Lorenzo tomorrow which has been controversially postponed.

Boca Juniors won their first Argentine league title in three years with the 3-0 victory thanks to two goals from Darío Cvitanich formerly of Banfield and loan at Boca from Ajax Amsterdam and another from Diego Rivero. Cvitanich gave Boca the lead in the 10th minute, slotting in a shot from five yards following a scramble in front of the net. He scored his second in the 44th, driving in a strike from a corner. Rivero sealed the win in the 47th with a 25 metre long range effort.

The win sealed Boca's 24th league title since the Argentine game went professional in 1931, and their eighth since the introduction of two championships per season in 1991. It was their first Apertura title since the 2008 tournament.

"La U", the tactical evolution in South America

British tabloid The Times have featured a column by journalist Gabriele Marcotti on the current success of club side Universidad de Chile and in particular its coach, Jorge Sampaoli.

"The tactical revolution" was headlined as Marcotti, a professional of vast experience titled his column highlighting the attacking, free-flowing football going around South American and taking Chilean football to new heights.

Many have already dubbed "la U" as "Barcelona of the Americas" while others are quick to point out they are the best side in the world at this very moment.

The issue is its exposure. Not many people in Europe or around the world watch South American club football though are aware of its clubs and competitions.

Marcotti provides a more objective opinion mentioning how Universidad de Chile has demolished Brazilian clubs Flamengo and Vasco da Gama which is no easy feat.

A long mention was also given to credit coach Jorge Sampaoli, attaining his early difficulties in his career and his long, sacrificing experiences that have taken him to the top.

Sampaoli is a man of many sacrifices, studying, learning in Europe and his applying his devoted style that mirrors that of his compatriot Marcelo Bielsa, adding that his teams "look better organised, with greater movements of play".

"He can be an erudite tactician but the world woke up late to see his talents", mentioning his 51 years of age and having not reached any prolific coaching job until 2002 spending two decades as a youth football coach.

There is also a comparison with the coaching in South America, explaining how "comparing the work rate with coaches in Europe, those who are considered 'workaholics' should refrain themselves from doing so as many practice golf during the week. Sampaoli is not of the type, he is absolutely different. He looks to be aligned with luck, like a monk, spiritually involved and his character is reflected on the pitch".

Marcotti exemplifies his style of coaching citing Sampaoli as he, "looks like he is not worried about material things. During his days between matches, he is at the training complex from 8.30am until 9pm at night".

To conclude, the article raises questions about whether the coach could make a move to Europe one day despite some rather lacklustre stints from colleagues.

"If Sampaoli can re-create his work elsewhere -and others imitate him, then we are close to seeing a great tactical revolution in the game".

Among the players, youngster Eduardo Vargas is highlighted who is being scouted by both Chelsea and Liverpool in the English Premier League and, according to Marcotti, another of his highlights is that the team does not have another player being monitored for the European market.

"It is all about Sampaoli and his tactics, not about the players".

Earlier today, Universidad de Chile fans caused havoc across the country, in particular Santiago in the attempt to purchase tickets for the second leg final of the Copa Sudamericana. Angry and violent scenes on the streets were fuelled due to poor management from the ticketing operators with fears thousands will miss out.

The Copa Sudamericana first leg final is played on Friday morning, local Australian time in Quito, Ecuador as Liga Deportiva Universitaria (LDU) host and face the opportunity to upset the undefeated Chilean side.

BRIEFS

Clive Palmer urges FFA to challenge FIFA leader

GOLD Coast United owner Clive Palmer has urged Football Federation Australia's (FFA) CEO and Chairman to lead the charge in calling for the resignation of FIFA chief Sepp Blatter following the recent racism row that has embroiled the leader of world football's governing body.

Mr Palmer said Blatter had brought the game into disrepute and should be held accountable for his remarks, not only on the issue of racism in the game, but also the alleged ongoing corruption within football's corridors of power.

"The whole game has been brought into disrepute by the comments of FIFA Chairman Sepp Blatter about racism in the code and the perception of corruption that exists in the international game. It's time for FFA to stand up and demand that this sort of activity be challenged," Mr Palmer said.

"I call upon Frank Lowy and Ben Buckley to call for the resignation of Sepp Blatter as he has brought the game into disrepute.

"If they are not prepared to do that then I'll be calling upon governments in various countries to move against their national associations and challenge football's leadership."

Maradona backs Tevez-Milan deal

Argentina legend Diego Maradona has backed Carlos Tevez's potential move to Italian champions AC Milan.

Tevez has been trying to engineer a way out of Manchester City and has been linked with a January loan to the Serie A champions.

Maradona, who managed Tevez while head coach of Argentina, called the striker's situation at the Premier League leaders 'unfortunate'.

"I hope that it's true (Tevez joining Milan) if it goes ahead," Maradona said.

"I really hope that this transfer takes place. I wish Carlos Tevez all the best; he should be back playing football."

"What has happened to him at Manchester City is unfortunate. If Milan do actually sign him they will be big winners - he is an amazing footballer, he was one of the best performers when he played with Manchester United and for Manchester City."

"I hope that he can be back on the pitch and playing football for Milan."

Maradona has made a good start to life as coach of United Arab Emirates outfit Al Wasl.

After six matches this season his side are third in the country's Pro-League. They are aiming for their first league title since 2007.

Suarez charged

Liverpool striker Luis Suarez has been charged with improper conduct by the FA after an alleged gesture towards Fulham fans on Monday night.

The Anfield outfit have also been reprimanded for failing to control their players after the sending -off of Jay Spearing during the clash at Craven Cottage.

Suarez was photographed leaving the pitch after Liverpool's 1-0 defeat when he seemingly stuck his middle finger up at the Fulham supporters.

Lustica adapts to life with Croatian big boys

By Con Stamocostas

1) Hey Steven, you have had a pretty eventful start to your football career in Europe, scoring on your playing debut, facing teams like Barcelona, playing in the Europa League and experiencing a fierce local derby. Tell us about your European odyssey so far? It's a far cry from playing in front of a dog and an esky at the Gold Coast?
Playing for Hajduk Split is a dream come true. Playing against my other favourite club Barcelona in Hajduk's 100 year anniversary game was a fantastic feeling.
The derby against Dinamo was something else. I now know what the word derby really means. Each corner of the city of Split was covered with Hajduk banners and flags, nothing else matters here.
There was a media conference held every day for the entire week before the game. The print media coverage of the game would fill the entire edition of the Gold Coast Bulletin.
Match day was something I have never experienced in my life. The choreography in the stadium set up by the 'torcida fans' is indescribable. For the full 90 mins they did not stop singing and chanting.
When we scored I thought the place was going to explode. You need to go on youtube to fully understand the atmosphere of the derby.

2) You made headlines in Australia when you signed for Hadjuk Split. Particularly with the "who is Miron (Bleiberg) " comment about your former coach, obviously you have moved forward but you must feel like you have proved some of your critics wrong?
My aim was always to play football at the highest possible level. For me its not about proving anyone wrong, I set my goals high and believe in my own ability.

3) Not a lot of young players who go overseas are able to make such a great start to their career how did you view the challenge of making into the first team and what goals did you set yourself this season?
My goal was always to break into the first team. It probably happened sooner than i expected, but now the challenge is even greater, and that is to maintain my starting position in the team.

Steven Lustica in action for Hajduk Split in the Croatian First Division.

4) Soon after you signed On 8 June 2011, with Croatian club Hajduk Split. you were caught up in a club vs country battle that saw you miss out on the youth World Cup. Did you see any of the games and what did you make of the team's performance and results?
I watched all the games on tv here live. Unfortunately we did not make the second round. However i know all the boys gave their best and there were some good performances.

5) How have you viewed Hadjuk's Start you are in second place behind Zagreb at the time of writing? Have any team mates impress you so far?
Our start to the season has been good and we are still currently second behind Dinamo Zagreb.
Our team is very young and there are some good Croatian youth international players. Our Captain Srdan Andric and vice captain Ljubo Milicevic have great experience and leadership qualities.

7) Have you spoken to FFA Technical director Hann Berger or anyone at the FFA about the comments he made about your decision to miss the Youth World Cup? When asked if it would affect your national team chances now or in the future he said:
"I think so. Holger gave a clear indication of that by not selecting them for the Serbia and New Zealand (Socceroos) games recently.
"They are young players and it's difficult for them. What will happen for the future, we will have to discuss internally."
What do you think of those comments and have you had any contact from Holger since then?
I have not had contact with anyone at FFA after my decision. I can understand their disappointment with my decision, but im sure they also understood the position i was in at the time.

8) Brent McGrath and Mathew Leckie happened to end up in the same situation as yourself and all three of you have made great starts to the season. I'm sure all three would have loved to have played for Australia at the Youth World Cup what were your feelings at the time?
Not electing to go to the world cup was the hardest decision i have had to make so far. I set myself that goal many years ago, unfortunately the timing of the tournament was not right.

9) How do you feel about representing the Socceroos? Playing regularly In Europe must give you confidence of a call up sooner rather than later
It would fulfil another goal of mine to be selected for the Socceroos, however i would need to be performing consistently well at a very high level before that would happen.

10) Being a player born of Croatian background have you had any offers from the Croatian FA to play for Croatia?
No I have had no offers from the Croatian FA.

11) Has having Croatian background helped you settle in easier? Do your teammates view you as a foreigner or one of the gang?
Yes my Croatian heritage has helped me settle in well. I speak Croatian and understand the culture and this has enabled me to feel at home.
My teammates have accepted me as part of the gang, but offcourse they remind me i am a 'klokan'(kangaroo in Croatian) at times.

12) Tell me how is fellow Aussie teammate Ljubo Milicevic doing he hasn't played much in the last few weeks? What's he like on and off the pitch?
Ljubo has played in the last two games including the derby against Dinamo and was captain in the last game against Cibalia. This shows how highly he is regarded by our coach Balakov.
On the pitch he is a leader, off the pitch he is well liked by everyone.

13) Who are your friends in football and would you say is your major influence in your career?
The major influence on my career has been my parents. My family is very important to me and without their support and guidance i would not be where i am now.

14) Tell us your thoughts on the A-League even though Miron did not use you often did the experience playing in the Youth League with Sydney FC and then with Gold Coast United help you in getting a chance with Hadjuk Split?
Obviously my time at Sydney FC and Gold Coast United assisted in the development of my game.
I believe my time with the under 20's was also beneficial as it exposed me to international football and some of the best players in the world from my age group.

15) What is a usual week for you? Can you give us an insight into a week as a player for on and off the field for Hadjuk Split?
Training is either once or twice per day depending on match day.
Times of training vary.
After morning training we have a team lunch and if we have training in the evening we have dinner together.
Our training schedule can also vary between home games and away games.
For the derby against Dinamo we went into camp on the island of Brac 4 days before the game even though it was a home game.
On other home games we go into a hotel on the day before the game and stay as a group until match day.
Usually we only have one day off during the week and i use this time to relax with friends and go to the beach which is walking distance from my apartment.
I have also had a lot of friends visit me from Oz this year and i have used my days off to meet up with them.

17) What kind of person are you? Describe yourself in a few words?
Ambitious, determined, loyal.

18) What are the main qualities you have as a footballer?
My Fitness, willingness to learn and commitment to the game.

19) What part of your game are you always trying to improve on?
I am always trying to improve myself on all aspects of the game.

20) I have worked with Canberra journalist Eamonn Flannagan and he would kill me if I don't ask you about the effect that Canberra had on your footballing education. What about an A-league team for Canberra. What do you think?
Without an A league team in Canberra there is no future for young players there.
I had to leave home at 17 to chase my football dream. It would have been so much easier if Canberra had a team.
My club Canberra Deakin had a massive influence on my football education. It exposed me to the technical aspects of the game from age 6. It is where i fell in love with the game and began dreaming of a life in professional football.
Canberra Deakin fully supported my move to Hajduk Split and were the first club to sign off on my transfer to Europe. I will never forget that.

VPL News

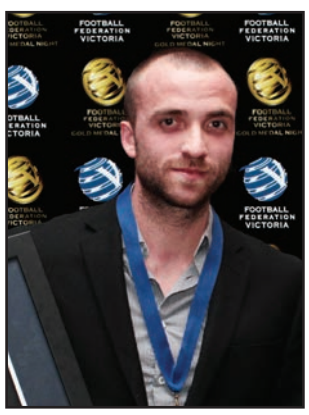
Mark Boric

VPL immersed in Pre-season

The provisional draw for the 2012 Victorian Premier League season has been released, though the possibility remains that major amendments will be required should a meeting of the FFV Board this month accept the Youth teams of Melbourne Victory and Melbourne Heart into the competition. With the season not set to commence until March 23rd, pre-season training at some clubs will be commencing in the new year, a rarity in the modern era.

Amongst the early starters, however, will be South Melbourne. The club will mark the re-opening of the redeveloped Lakeside Stadium with a friendly against NSWPL Champions Sydney Olympic this Sunday at 5.30 pm. The first hit-out under new coach Peter Tsolakis could give fans a glimpse of new signings Trent Rixon (Northcote City), Luke Byles (Heidelberg United) and Bradley Norton (Adelaide United). Also rumoured to be heading to Lakeside are last season's Gold Medal winner Jason Trifiro, Glen Trifiro (both Northcote City) and Dimitri Tsiaras (Richmond)

Promoted Whittlesea Zebras have moved quickly to bolster their squad, netting Carl Recchia, Daniel Vasilevski and Steven Weir from South Melbourne as well as VPL Goalkeeper of the Year Griffin McMaster from Heidelberg United. Another new face in coach Dom Barba's squad will be Ben Griffin, a former Brisbane Roar player signed from Brisbane Strikers. No home ground has been listed in their fixtures, with a shift away from Epping Stadium and a name change a possibility.


Jason Trifiro could be on the way to Lakeside Stadium

Andy Vlahos swaps Hume City for the Heidelberg United job

Coach Paul Magdic will get a full season at Melbourne Knights

Keeper of the Year Griffin McMaster becomes a Zebra

Reigning Champions Green Gully have acquired midfielder Ross Thompson from Hume City, a former VPL Gold Medal winner. Likely to retain most of their squad, Ian Dobson and the Cavaliers will again be the team to beat in 2012.

Beaten Grand Finalists Oakleigh Cannons have a new boss, with VPL Coach of the Year Arthur Papas joining the staff at Newcastle Jets. He has been replaced by Huss Skenderevic, a former assistant to Michael Chatzifrinos at Richmond who had a spell in charge at Western Suburbs this year. Striker Jesse Krncevic has been lured from South Melbourne with further transfers on the cards, such as long-term target Goran Zoric (Springvale White Eagles).

In contrast, fellow new boys Southern Stars have yet to be linked to any new recruits. Coach Dean Hennessey may look to the UK and Ireland for new talent, a path which has proven successful for him in the past. The VPL first-timers will be playing out of Kingston Heath Soccer Complex.

Kingston Heath major tenants Bentleigh Greens are rumoured to have picked up VPL journeyman Hamlet Armenian and Nick Curtis from Northcote City. John Antastasiadis has been retained as coach.

Hume City have appointed Lou Acevski as their new coach, with former boss Andy Vlahos returning to Olympic Village to take over at Heidelberg United. Keeping the highly sought after Richie Cardozo could be the key to their hopes of once again being in the Finals mix.

Youngsters Peter Sawan and Arthur Papadopoulos have joined the Bergers from Port Melbourne. Speculation remains that the exciting Osagie Ederaro will be heading in the opposite direction.

Dandenong Thunder, who's season fell apart after points deductions and heavy fines incurred at the FFV Tribunal, have appointed Chris Taylor as coach. Taylor had a very brief spell in charge last season in the upheaval that followed the team's decline following the drawn out Tribunal saga and the departure of coach Stuart Munro to Perth Glory.

Richmond coach Michael Chatzitrifonos will enter his fifth season at the helm at Kevin Bartlett Reserve having retain the bulk of the squad which finished the season strongly. With Tom Milardovic (St Albans) and Steven Topalovic (South Melbourne) returning to the fold, the Eagles will also be hoping Davey van 't Schip, another member of their 2010 Minor Premiership team, can make a successful return from a knee injury.

The off-season began terribly for Mirabella Cup winners Northcote City, losing influential coach Peter Tsolakis to South Melbourne along with talismanic striker Trent Rixon. The election of the popular Peter Kotsiris as President has seen the ship steadied, with the remainder of the squad committing to stay and joined by defender James Stefanou (Melbourne Knights). VPL Championship winning coach Goran Lozavovski has taken over the reigns after joining the club as an assistant last season.

Melbourne Knights, who finished the season well with a youthful side, will have Paul Magdic coaching his first full season after taking over following the departure of Ivan Duzel mid-season. Bringing back the popular Brian Bran from Oakleigh Cannons will be a priority, the defender winning a penalty competition in their colours at half-time during the Mirabella Cup Final.

Round One VPL Fixtures

Fri 23 Mar 8:15PM Bentleigh Greens v Green Gully Cavaliers @ Kingston Heath Soccer Complex
Sat 24 Mar 3:00PM Dandenong Thunder v Southern Stars @ George Andrews Reserve
Sat 24 Mar 3:00PM South Melbourne v Whittlesea Zebras @ Lakeside Stadium
Sat 24 Mar 6:00PM Heidelberg United v Oakleigh Cannons @ Olympic Park
Sun 25 Mar 3:00PM Northcote City v Richmond @ John Cain Memorial Park
Sun 25 Mar 6:00PM Melbourne Knights v Hume City @ Knights Stadium

Man City to face Chelsea test

EPL Wrap

Alex Luttrell

As we begin to reach the middle of the season, the Barclays Premier League is looking considerably different in terms of the table.

The familiar sight of the red of Manchester atop the table has been removed by their bitter sky blue city rivals and this does not look like it is about to change.

The Manchester City steam train looks like it will be a never ending ride for the players and fans after demolishing Norwich at Etihad Stadium on Saturday 5-1 thanks to five different scorers in Sergio Aguero, Samir Nasri, Yaya Toure, Mario Balotelli and Andy Johnson.

This steam train is more like a charging bull into the heart of Sir Alex Ferguson's Manchester United, who would be more and more worried that his side will not catch their rivals.

United managed to defeat Aston Villa 1-0 thanks to a first goal from Phil Jones, the fourth time out of five they have won by that score line since losing to City 6-1 causing the top two positions to stay the same since that very day.

Elsewhere, Tottenham managed to hold onto third spot over fourth placed Chelsea with a 3-0 win over Bolton thanks to goals from Gareth Bale, Aaron Lennon and Jerome Defoe after Gary Cahill was dismissed early.

Chelsea are still nipping at the north Londoners' ankles with a 3-0 win over Newcastle away thanks to goals from Didier Drogba, Salomon Kalou and Daniel Sturridge.

That win helped Arsenal more than anything, with the Gunners leapfrogging Newcastle into fifth with a 4-0 win at Wigan. Mikel Arteta, Thomas Vermaelen, Gervinho and Robin van Persie all netted for Arsenal in the rampage.

Liverpool's campaign has just become tougher with a 1-0 loss to Fulham at Craven Cottage. After 72 minutes of play, Jay Spearing was sent off for a lunging tackle on Moussa Dembele. On the replay the youngster appeared to get the ball fairly before the player.

Consequentially, Clint Dempsey netted for Fulham on the 85th minute, a result which was not indicative of Liverpool's dominant performance over the course of the game.

In other games, Stoke overcame Everton 1-1 at Goodison Park, Wolves defeated Sunderland 2-1 at the Molineux, QPR drew 1-1 with West Brom and Blackburn defeated Swansea 4-2 at Ewood Park, helping them lift off the bottom of the table, but still in the drop zone.

EPL preview:

The upcoming game week of the Barclays Premier League is shaping up to be a crucial one for many of the top seven sides, particularly the Manchester rivals who hold the top two spots on the table.

Manchester United has a chance to edge closer to their city rivals with a win over Wolves this Saturday at Old Trafford. This is in regard to the consideration of Manchester City's tough assignment in Chelsea at Stamford Bridge on Monday.

The Manchester rivals are going point for point with each other since their last meeting and the five point advantage for City has yet to be broken.

And still this week statistics are against United at being able to edge to within two points of the leaders as Andre Villas-Boas' side has lost two of their last three games at home in all competitions.

Those losses were against Liverpool, a side that Manchester City managed to draw against at Anfield with ten men. With this in mind it would seem an evidently tough task for Chelsea to defeat the sky blues at home, but will make for an exciting and crucial contest nonetheless.

Outside the Manchester rivalry and Chelsea's predicament of holding a top four spot after this week, Arsenal and Newcastle all have a chance of breaking into fourth spot.

This is a tough task as they would have to both get maximum points and hope that Chelsea slip up at home to have any change occur in the top four at all.

Only one side will be able to enter the top four if this is the case, which will come down to goal difference .Arsenal sit fifth and are the more likely to win against Everton at the Emirates with Newcastle travelling to Carrow Road where they could be in for a tough match against Norwich.

However, a top four berth for the Gunners or the Magpies may never even happen if Chelsea manages to beat City, a feat which as far as history is concerned looks good for the hosts.

City have not beaten the blues at Stamford Bridge since February 2010 and if Chelsea keep this run going they could very easily move into third if Tottenham slip up against Stoke City at the Britannia.

Stoke have not defeated Spurs at home since October 2008 so it looks as though Tottenham are set to hold third spot regardless of Chelsea's efforts.

This week Liverpool looks to overcome a loss against Fulham, which was not indicative of their performance, against QPR at Anfield.

A win for Kenny Dalglish's men could see them up to a possible fifth spot on goal difference if both Arsenal and Newcastle fail to register any points, a task which looks to be out of reach for the reds at the moment.

Euro 2012 Groups decided

Holders Spain will face Italy, Republic of Ireland and Croatia in Group C of UEFA EURO 2012 after Friday's final tournament draw at the Palace of Arts in Kyiv, Ukraine.

The draw also threw up a tournament-opening game for Poland against the UEFA EURO 2004 winners Greece at the National Stadium Warsaw on 8 June. Poland, pre-designated the seeded team in Group A, also have the prospect of central and eastern European derbies with the Czech Republic and Russia respectively.

For the other co-host nation, who were seeded first in Group D, there are equally enticing challenges in store in six months' time: Ukraine will take on the might of Sweden, France and England.

There also promises to be no quarter given in Group B where three former European champions – the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany – will come up against Portugal, the runners-up in 2004, in what is the toughest-looking section.

Poland will launch the tournament on Friday 8 June against Greece in Warsaw followed by the other Group A opener between Russia and the Czech Republic. The next day the Netherlands face Denmark in Kharkiv and Germany take on Portugal in Lviv to begin Group B, and on 10 June Group C starts as holders Spain play Italy and the Republic of Ireland are matched with Croatia.

Ukraine are involved in the last of the opening set of fixtures, meeting Sweden in Group D in Kyiv after England tackle France in Donetsk. The group stage runs until 19 June, then, after a rest day, the quarter-finals take place over four consecutive nights. The semi-finals are on 29 June in Donetsk and the following evening in Warsaw, before Kyiv stages the 1 July decider.

Euro 2012 - The Schedule

Group A (Warsaw/ Wroclaw)	Group B (Kharkiv/ Lviv)	Group C (Gdansk/ Poznan)	Group D (Kyiv/ Donetsk)
Poland (co-hosts)	Netherlands	Spain (holders)	Ukraine (co-hosts)
Greece	Denmark	Italy	Sweden
Russia	Germany	Republic of Ireland	France
Czech Republic	Portugal	Croatia	England

Group Games

Fri 8 June	Mon 11 June	Thu 14 June	Sun 17 June
POL v GRE	FRA v ENG	ITA v CRO	POR v NED
RUS v CZE	UKR v SWE	ESP v IRL	DEN v GER
Sat 9 June	Tue 12 June	Fri 15 June	Mon 18 June
NED v DEN	GRE v CZE	SWE v ENG	CRO v ESP
GER v POR	POL v RUS	UKR v FRA	ITA v IRL
Sun 10 June	Wed 13 June	Sat 16 June	Tue 19 June
ESP v ITA	DEN v POR	CZE v POL	ENG v UKR
IRL v CRO	NED v GER	GRE v RUS	SWE v FRA

2nd Stage

Wed 20 June	Sat 23 June	**SEMI FINALS**	Fri 29 June
No matches	**#27:** 1C v 2D, Donetsk	Wed 27 June	No matches
Thu 21 June	Sun 24 June	**#29:** W#25 v W#27 Donetsk	Sat 30 June
#25: 1A v 2B, Warsaw	**#28:** 1D v 2C, Kyiv	Thu 28 June	No matches
Fri 22 June		**#30:** W#26 v W#28 Warsaw	**FINAL**
#26: 1B v 2A, Gdansk			Sun 1 July
			#31: **W#29 v W#30** Kyiv

Stunned Man U crash out after defeat

By Mark Smith

Group A

Napoli's 2-0 victory over Villarreal sent Manchester City tumbling out of the Champions League on Wednesday.

Roberto Mancini's men needed to defeat Bayern Munich and hope Villarreal could earn at least a point at the Madrigal to qualify for the knockout stages from Group A.

And although City eased past an under-strength Bayern 2-0, goals from Gokhan Inler and Marek Hamsik in Spain kept Napoli in second place and sent them into the last 16.

In the end City's efforts came to nothing though, with Napoli's victory consigning the Sky Blues to third place in the group and a Europa League berth.

Group B

Russian outfit CSKA Moscow progressed to the last 16 of the Champions League with a last-gasp 2-1 win at Inter Milan on Wednesday.

With top spot in Group B already confirmed, Inter boss Claudio Ranieri took the opportunity to rest the likes of goalkeeper Julio Cesar and star forward Giampaolo Pazzini.

Trabzonspor will drop into the Europa League after finishing third in Group B while Lille bow out of European competition altogether.

Group C

Manchester United failed to qualify for the Champions League last 16 for the first time in six years after a 2-1 defeat at Basel on Wednesday.

Strikes from Marco Streller and Alexander Frei gave the hosts a 2-0 advantage, and although Phil Jones scrambled a late goal for United, they failed to find the equaliser they needed to claim second in Group C.

The result sees United crash out of Europe's premier club competition at the group stage for the first time since 2005, and Basel equal their best performance in the tournament since 2003.

Furthermore, United's long term prospects suffered a further blow with the loss of captain Nemanja Vidic to what appears to be a serious knee injury.

The Portuguese side confirmed top spot in Group C with a 1-0 win at home against Romanian outfit Otelul Galati; Oscar Cardozo scoring the winner for Benfica after just seven minutes.

Group D

Six second-half goals gave Lyon a 7-1 win over Dinamo Zagreb and helped complete an incredible comeback in the Champions League.

Needing to beat Dinamo and overcome a goal difference of seven goals to overtake Ajax in the Group D standings, Lyon turned on an incredible display at the Stadion Maksimir, scoring seven goals in a 31 minute period to storm into the last 16.

Dinamo were reduced to 10 men early on when Jerko Leko received his second booking, but took the lead in the 40th minute through Mateo Kovacic.

Things were looking bleak for Lyon, until one of the most amazing spells in Champions League history had them back in the game.

Bafetimbi Gomis was the catalyst, scoring Lyon's first a minute before half-time, before Remy Garde's side added three more inside the first seven minutes of the second period.

This included two more to Gomis, who completed the fastest ever Champions League hat-trick in just seven minutes.

Real Madrid won Group D with 18 points from six games, just the fifth time a team has had a perfect record in the group stage, while Ajax have to settle for Europa League action in 2012.

Manchester United fail to advance past the UCL group stage for only the third time in 17 years after a 2-1 defeat at Basel.

Group E

Chelsea eased the pressure on manager Andre Villas-Boas with a 3-0 victory over Valencia to qualify top of Champions League Group E.

Didier Drogba opened the scoring from close-range after just three minutes to set them on their way, before Ramires capitalised on a moment of laziness from Victor Ruiz to add a second midway through the first half.

Elsewhere, Bayer Leverkusen were denied top spot in the group after they were held to a 1-1 draw away at Genk.

With their spot in the last 16 already confirmed, Leverkusen could be forgiven for taking it easy in Belgium.

Group F

Marseille staged a miraculous comeback to come from two goals to win in Dortmund and qualify for the last 16 of the Champions League.

That was despite Olympiakos' 3-1 win over Arsenal, which the Greeks thought had sent them through from Group F.

The French side seemed less likely to earn the win they needed for progression until the 85th minute, when Andre Ayew headed in the equaliser from a corner and just two minutes later, Mathieu Valbuena scored a goal fit to win any game.

The French side's victory was heartbreaking for Olympiakos, who thought they were through, but the news from Dortmund soon filtered through and celebration turned into commiseration as a group of stunned players stared at the big screen in disbelief.

Group G

Portuguese champions Porto were eliminated from the Champions League after they could only muster a 0-0 draw against Zenit St Petersburg.

Needing a victory to secure a spot in the next round from Group G, Porto applied pressure in the Russian midfield at the beginning of the match, barely allowing their visitors to breathe.

Zenit celebrated their progression alongside Cypriot outfit APOEL, who became just the third team to win a group with less than 10 points after they lost their final match 2-0 at home to Shakhtar Donetsk.

Group H

Barcelona beat BATE Borisov 4-0 while Viktoria Plzen scored two late goals to claim a 2-2 draw against AC Milan in the Champions League.

A youthful Barca outfit were far too good for their Belarusian opponents at the Nou Camp as the reigning La Liga champions finished Group H unbeaten.

With their qualification as group winners already confirmed, Pep Guardiola chose to select a young side with an average of just 23.

UEFA Champions League - Match Day 6

Group A	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 BMunich	6	4	1	1	11	6	5	13
2 Napoli	6	3	2	1	10	6	4	11
3 Man City	6	3	1	2	9	6	3	10
4 Villarreal	6	0	0	6	2	14	-12	0

Man City 2-0 Bayern Munich
Villarreal 0-2 Napoli

Group B	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Inter	6	3	1	2	8	7	1	10
2 CSKA	6	2	2	2	9	8	1	8
3 Trabzons	6	1	4	1	3	5	-2	7
4 Lille	6	1	3	2	6	6	0	6

Lille 0-0 Trabzonspor
Inter Milan 1-2 CSKA Moscow

Group C	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Benfica	6	3	3	0	8	4	4	12
2 FC Basel	6	3	2	1	11	10	1	11
3 Man Utd	6	2	3	1	11	8	3	9
4 Galati	6	0	0	6	3	11	-8	0

FC Basel 2-1 Man Utd
Benfica 1-0 Otelul Galati

Group D	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 R Madrid	6	6	0	0	19	2	17	18
2 Lyon	6	2	2	2	9	7	2	8
3 Ajax	6	2	2	2	6	6	0	8
4 Zagreb	6	0	0	6	3	22	-19	0

Dinamo Zagreb 1-7 Lyon
Ajax 0-3 Real Madrid

Group E	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Chelsea	6	3	2	1	13	4	9	11
2 Leverkus	6	3	1	2	8	8	0	10
3 Valencia	6	2	2	2	12	7	5	8
4 Genk	6	0	3	3	2	16	-14	3

Chelsea 3-0 Valencia
Genk 1-1 Bayer Leverkusen

Group F	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Arsenal	6	3	2	1	7	6	1	11
2 Marseille	6	3	1	2	7	4	3	10
3 Olympia	6	3	0	3	8	6	2	9
4 Dortmund	6	1	1	4	6	12	-6	4

Olympiakos 3-1 Arsenal
Borussia Dortmund 2-3 Marseille

Group G	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Apoel	6	2	3	1	6	6	0	9
2 Zenit	6	2	3	1	7	5	2	9
3 FC Porto	6	2	2	2	7	7	0	8
4 Shakhtark	6	1	2	3	6	8	-2	5

FC Porto 0-0 Zenit St Petersburg
Apoel Nicosia 0-2 Shakhtar Donetsk

Group H	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Barcelona	6	5	1	0	20	4	16	16
2 AC Milan	6	2	3	1	11	8	3	9
3 Plzen	6	1	2	3	4	11	-7	5
4 BATE	6	0	2	4	2	14	-12	2

Barcelona 4-0 BATE Borisov
Plzen 2-2 AC Milan

Misery for Inter and Roma

SERIE A 2011 - 2012

Luca Cetta

Inter slipped at the crucial moment against Udinese on Saturday night, as Roma capitulated away to Fiorentina. Juventus continued their unbeaten start, with the chasing pack all keeping pace. Lecce became the latest to change Coach.

Last week Inter tactician Claudio Ranieri suggested they still has Scudetto ambitions, but the situation worsened for the Nerazzurri at home against Udinese, suffering a 1-0 defeat. Mauricio Isla scored the only goal in a frantic final fifteen minutes.

Following the strike, Javier Zanetti was sent off for a second bookable offence, yet Antonio Di Natale saw his penalty saved by Julio Cesar. Almost instantly the ball was on the spot at the other end as Damiano Ferronetti fouled. Giampaolo Pazzini stepped up but slipped when making contact, sending the penalty over the crossbar. Ferronetti was sent off for taking his protests too far but Udinese claimed all three points.

Worryingly for Inter, this was the sixth straight home match in which their strikers failed to find the net; Pazzini's slip indicative of the current situation. Currently fifteen points behind Juventus, President Massimo Moratti cooled Ranieri's Scudetto talk, but noted a Champions League place is "an absolute must."

Roma continued their inconsistent streak with a calamitous 3-0 defeat at Fiorentina. The capital club finished the match with eight men after an early dismissal to Juan and second half red cards to Fernando Gago and Bojan Krkic. The Spaniard's dismissal especially inexplicable: with five minutes left and two goals behind, he handled on the line from a corner to stop a certain goal which eventually went in via the penalty spot.

Fans are beginning to lose patience with Luis Enrique, even if the club directors do not share the same sentiments. The ex-Barcelona B Coach noted he would resign only "if the players aren't following me anymore." All this comes after a tense week following the Pablo Osvaldo-Erik Lamela dressing room altercation in Udine.

Not having any such issues are Juventus and Milan. The Turin giants were frustrated for 78 minutes by a Cesena side intent on leaving the Juventus Stadium with a point, but Claudio Marchisio scored his sixth of the season to ease fears. Juve had dropped points against similar opponents already this year but there would be no such repeat as they then converted a controversial late penalty. Alessandro Del Piero was a second half substitute but he would remember little of his 500th League appearance for Juve following a kick to the head just eight minutes after his arrival that required eight stitches and an overnight hospital stay.

Milan's trip to Genoa was temporarily halted fifteen minutes in as tear gas used to disperse scuffling fans outside the stadium entered the arena, having an effect on players, officials and fans. Tensions are high at the Stadio Luigi Ferraris when the two sides meet after the stabbing of a Genoa fan back in 1995. When play resumed, Milan were in control and despite Robinho's incredible miss from just a metre out, goals from Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Antonio Nocerino sealed the result.

Napoli warmed up for their crucial Champions League encounter with a 4-2 victory over Lecce. Edinson Cavani netted a brace, Ezequiel Lavezzi a fine solo effort and Blerim Dzemaili from distance as Eusebio Di Francesco's reign at Lecce came to an end. The only side in Serie A without a win at home, Lecce have turned to the colourful Serse Cosmi.

Inter were stunned by Udinese at home and now found themselves in unfamiliar territory at the wrong end of the table.

Palermo has now gained more points away from home (two) than goals scored (zero) after a 0-0 draw at Parma. The game was in doubt due to fog and fans in the stadium probably could not see the other side of the pitch for most of the match. Lazio had no problems in dispatching of Novara, Tomasso Rocchi on target twice in a 3-0 win.

Cagliari secured a win at Catania thanks to a fantastic individual goal by Victor Ibarbo, who danced his way past defenders and goalkeeper alike. Bologna also won by a slender margin after a finely crafted goal finished off by veteran Marco Di Vaio. Finally, Chievo and Atalanta shared the spoils in a goalless draw.

Eyes will be fixed on Rome's Stadio Olimpico on Monday night as a depleted Roma tackles league leaders Juventus. The television audience will experience a match in 3D for the first time in Italy. Luis Enrique has bigger problems to deal with thanks to injury and suspension. He is short at the back and may start Daniele De Rossi in the centre of defence, along with Gabriel Heinze, the only available central defender. Juve will welcome back Andrea Pirlo from a one-match ban, while Del Piero should be available. However, Mirko Vucinic will miss his return to Rome after suffering a thigh injury against Cesena.

Two of the three Champions League participants are on the road. Milan travels to Bologna fresh from a dead rubber draw against Viktoria Plzen where they coughed up a two-goal advantage in the dying moments, while Napoli will be buoyed by their win in Spain versus Villarreal, a result that sealed qualification. Inter entertains Fiorentina with their poor domestic form a problem they hope to eradicate. The Nerazzurri had Champions League qualification sealed before the midweek home loss against CSKA Moscow.

Cosmi begins at Lecce with a home clash versus Lazio, while fellow high-flyer Udinese hosts Chievo. Atalanta will be looking for a win after three consecutive draws when they face Catania as Davide Ballardini's Cagliari meets Parma. Palermo will aim to continue their ominous home form against Cesena and finally Siena and Genoa square off.

Viva Espana

Pepe Lopez

Del Bosque Focuses on Euro's Group C

European Championship title holders and Euro2012 favorites Spain have been drawn in next year's European finals tournament with Italy, Croatia and Ireland.

"It's always difficult. Croatia and Ireland qualified via the play-offs but they won by very big margins. So I think we'll have to prepare well, get there in our best form, and focus more on ourselves than our opponents." Claimed Spanish National Coach Vicente Del Bosque.

"And then there'll be a classic match against Italy..."

Spain's opening match will be against Italy in the Northern Polish city of Gdansk on the 10th of June, in fact Spain will be based in Gdansk for the entire first round of matches, which also includes Ireland on the 14th of June and Croatia on the 18th of June. Home of Polish Football Club "Lechia Gdansk", PGE Arena Gdansk will seat 40,000 spectators for Euro2012, and was opened on the 14th of August earlier this year. If as expected, Spain should advance past the first round, they will be on the road (or in the air) across the border and into Ukraine, in either Kyiv or Donetsk to take the advancing teams from Euro2012's group D, which includes hosts Ukraine, Sweden, France and England.

"I think that there aren't any major differences between sides in modern football. Every team is basically pretty well balanced and set up. And most of the players play in Europe at big European clubs...

Each team has its own style but what's important in the end is to win the matches. Del Bosque stated at the Euro2012 Draw held in Kyiv over the past weekend.

Later, when interviewed on television, Del Bosque was quoted as stating "Italy have only just beaten us and they are strong opponents.

It will be tough, in the European Championships there are 16 tough teams and every one poses their own threat. We will prepare carefully, we have to focus on our own game and get ready."

Meanwhile in the UEFA Champions League competition, Spain will only have two clubs in the round of the 16 next season, as Valencia finished in 3rd place in Group E behind England's Chelsea and Germany's Bayer 04 Leverkusen.

Valencia, finishing the Group E as the third placed team Belgiam's KRC Genk, will gain the consolation prize of advancing to the round of 32 in the UEFA Europa League.

With Villarreal already eliminated and set to finish last in Group A, Real Madrid and Barcelona, ironically favorites to win the competition, will be only Spanish clubs in the Champions League play-offs.

Real Madrid complete the group stage with an away trip to Holland's Ajax Amsterdam and Villareal will host Italy's Napoli. Barcelona completed their dominant campaign to date with a 4-0 win at home Belarusian club BATE.

Balkan Wrap

Alex Milic

Serbia

Partizan maintained its seven point lead at the top of the Serbian Super-Liga after handing Radnicki Kragujevac their first defeat of the season.

The 'Black and Whites' broke the deadlock on the half hour mark through star player Zvonimir Vukic. The defending Champions have only conceded five goals in 14 matches this season. Red Star edged out FK Rad in a dramatic match at the 'Vracar' which saw the home side take the lead just before half time through Ivan Rogac.

Red Star leveled proceedings through Evandro on the stroke of the hour mark. The 'Red and Whites' had the initiative and deservedly took home three points as Andrija Kaludjerovic scored in the third minute of stoppage time to secure a vital win for Prosinecki and co. Vojvodina is now third on the table following Radnicki's loss, as they defeated relegation battlers Borac Cacak 3:1 with goals from Bojovic and a double from Ilic. The 'Red and Whites' from Novi Sad have the chance to cut the deficit between them and Red Star to only two points as they play next week in the 'Derby' match of Round 15. Paritzan should have no trouble against bottom of the table Metalac which finally won their first match this season as Jagodina became the first victim for the lowly side.

"We knew it was going to be a tough match following the derby. I would like to congratulate my players on the character they showed in the second half as we were down 0:1 and managed to get the win. Even if it stayed at 1:1 I would have congratulated them on their character, I honestly thing we dominated the second half and deserved the late goal. We have seven days to prepare for the match against Vojvodina. We will work hard during the week and I believe we will end the year with a win." Robert Prosinecki said.

Croatia

Dinamo Zagreb's lead at the top of the Croatian First League has been cut to six points following the sides 2:2 draw with Cibalia.

The home side took the early lead in vinkovci but Dinamo leveled at the start of the second half and then took the lead with 15 minutes remaining but Cibalia found an equalizer with three minutes remaining.

Hajduk took advantage of the league leaders slip up as they overcame NK Zadar in a 'Dalmation Derby' with the only goal going to Anas Sharbini with 15 minutes remaining. Hajduk was a few days earlier knocked out of the Croatian Cup following a loss on penalties to Zagreb. Varazdin had something to smile about as the financially stricken club got the points against fellow relegation battlers Sibenik.

Not a good week for Dinamo after dropping points domestically and then falling foul of a 7-1 hiding in the UCL.

This was the last round as the league takes a Winter break. For Dinamo it will be a well deserved break following the disappointment in the Champions League, they must now turn their attention to the league and hope for no more slip ups as Hajduk will be hot on their heels.

Dinamo's nightmare in the UEFA Champions League has finally come to an end as the Croatian Champions suffered their biggest home defeat in the clubs 100 year history. French side Lyon put seven past the helpless Dinamo in a 7:1 win at the 'Maksimir'. The butchering meant Dinamo is now the worse side to ever play in the completion with a shocking record, they conceded 22 goals and only managed to score 3. Both Lyon (9) and Ajax (7) scored all of their goals in the Group Stages against the Croatian side.

What can be learned from the dismal campaign? Dinamo is definitely out of their depth and it proved to be a step to far for a club that was itching to finally play in the competition.

The Croatian media and fans will be calling for Manager Jurcic's and Club President's Mamic's head following the embarrassment. The only goal for Dinamo against Lyon was scored by 17 year old Mateo Kovacic who no becomes the youngest player to score in the Champions League.

Greece

AEK Athens is the new leader of the Greek SuperLeague following Panathiniakos loss to Aris. Olympiakos is second as they edged out Panaitolikos at home 2:0 with second half goals to Pantelic and Djebbour.

The new league leaders overcame Kerkyra thanks to African sensation Stevo Beleck's 76th minute strike. In the derby match of the round In Thessaloniki Aris was too good for Panthinaikos in a 3:1 victory. Goals to Cesarec, Dickoh and Neto have taken Aris out of the relegation zone in a vital win for the 'yellows'. Aris will look to back up the win when they take on Asteras over the weekend. AEK will look to consolidate their lead as they take on Giannina. Both Olympiakos and Panathiniakos are on the road as the 'Red and Whites' take Kerkyra while the 'Greens' will look to bounce back against Panionios.

Olympiakos was very unlucky in the Champions League as they defeated Arsenal at home 3:1 but the win counted for nothing as Marseille joined the London club in the Round of 16 thanks to two late goals against Borussia Dortmund which propelled Olympiakos to the Europa League. The Greek Champions can however be very proud of their campaign and must now look ahead to the Europa League knockout stages.

Turkey

Galatasaray and Fenerbahce are locked on top of the Turkish League with 28 points.

The two played out a thrilling encounter in the Turkish classic which ended in favor of the home side as goals from Eboue, Elmander and Felipe Melo gave the home side a valuable 3:1 win. Alex scored a consolation goal for Fener in stoppage time. The win has put Gala equal on top of the standings, they'll hope to add another vital win as they take on Trabzonspor over the weekend in another derby match while Fener will look to bounce back when they take on 2009/2010 Champions Bursaspor. Third takes on fourth as Besiktas will look to cut the gap at the top to one point when they take on Manisaspor. The 'Black and Whites' will take on Istanbul over the weekend.

ENGLAND EPL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Manchester City	14	12	2	0	48	13	+35	38	W D W W W
2 Manchester United	14	10	3	1	31	13	+18	33	W D W W W
3 Tottenham Hotspur	13	10	1	2	29	16	+13	31	W W W W W
4 Chelsea	14	9	1	4	31	17	+14	28	W W L W L
5 Arsenal	14	8	2	4	30	23	+7	26	W D W W W
6 Newcastle United	14	7	5	2	19	15	+4	26	L D L W W
7 Liverpool	14	6	5	3	17	13	+4	23	L D W D W
8 Stoke City	14	5	3	6	14	23	-9	18	W W L L L
9 Aston Villa	14	3	7	4	16	18	-2	16	L D L W D
10 Everton	13	5	1	7	15	17	-2	16	L W W L L
11 Norwich City	14	4	4	6	20	26	-6	16	L W L L D
12 Queens Park Ra…	14	4	4	6	15	25	-10	16	D L W L L
13 Fulham	14	3	6	5	16	16	+0	15	W D D L W
14 West Bromwich …	14	4	3	7	13	21	-8	15	D L W L L
15 Swansea City	14	3	5	6	14	20	-6	14	L D L D W
16 Wolverhampton …	14	4	2	8	15	24	-9	14	W L L W L
17 Sunderland	14	2	5	7	16	17	-1	11	L L D L D
18 Blackburn Rovers	14	2	4	8	21	32	-11	10	W L D L D
19 Bolton Wanderers	14	3	0	11	19	34	-15	9	L L L W L
20 Wigan Athletic	14	2	3	9	12	28	-16	9	L W D L L

SPAIN La Liga

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Real Madrid	14	12	1	1	49	10	+39	37	W W W W W
2 Barcelona	15	10	4	1	47	7	+40	34	W W L W D
3 Valencia	14	9	3	2	23	14	+9	30	W W L W W
4 Levante	14	8	2	4	23	17	+6	26	L W L L L
5 Sevilla	14	6	6	2	16	10	+6	24	W W L D L
6 Málaga	14	7	2	5	19	19	+0	23	L W W D W
7 Osasuna	14	5	6	3	18	26	-8	21	W W D L W
8 Atlético Madrid	14	5	4	5	21	21	+0	19	W L W L W
9 Athletic Club	14	4	6	4	20	17	+3	18	D L W D D
10 Espanyol	14	5	2	7	11	17	-6	17	L L D D L
11 Rayo Vallecano	15	4	4	7	16	22	-6	16	L L L D W
12 Granada	14	4	4	6	8	14	-6	16	D W W D W
13 Real Sociedad	14	4	3	7	15	22	-7	15	W W D L L
14 Mallorca	14	3	6	5	13	20	-7	15	D D W D L
15 Villarreal	14	3	5	6	11	20	-9	14	L L W D W
16 Getafe	14	3	4	7	14	22	-8	13	L W L W L
17 Real Betis	14	4	1	9	13	21	-8	13	L L L D L
18 Racing Santander	14	2	6	6	10	20	-10	12	W L L D W
19 Sporting Gijón	14	3	3	8	12	24	-12	12	L L W D D

ITALY Serie A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Juventus	13	8	5	0	24	10	+14	29	W D W W W
2 Milan	13	8	3	2	29	14	+15	27	W W D W W
3 Udinese	13	8	3	2	16	6	+10	27	W W L W W
4 Lazio	13	7	4	2	19	9	+10	25	W L D W W
5 Napoli	13	5	5	3	21	13	+8	20	W D D D L
6 Palermo	13	6	2	5	16	15	+1	20	D W L W L
7 Cagliari	13	4	5	4	12	13	-1	17	W D L L L
8 Roma	13	5	2	6	15	17	-2	17	L L W W L
9 Catania	13	4	5	4	14	19	-5	17	L W L L W
10 Fiorentina	13	4	4	5	13	11	+2	16	W L D L W
11 Parma	13	5	1	7	15	20	-5	16	D L W L W
12 Chievo	13	4	4	5	10	16	-6	16	D L W W L
13 Genoa	12	4	3	5	14	16	-2	15	L L W L W
14 Atalanta	13	5	6	2	16	15	+1	15	D D D W L
15 Inter	12	4	2	6	14	18	-4	14	L W W L D
16 Siena	13	3	5	5	14	12	+2	14	L L D L W
17 Bologna	13	4	2	7	11	18	-7	14	W D L L W
18 Novara	13	2	4	7	14	24	-10	10	L W L L D
19 Cesena	13	2	3	8	6	15	-9	9	L W W L L
20 Lecce	13	2	2	9	11	23	-12	8	L L L W D

GERMANY Bundesliga

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Bayern München	15	10	1	4	38	9	+29	31	W L L W W
2 Borussia Dortmund	15	9	3	3	30	10	+20	30	D W W W D
3 Borussia M'gla…	15	9	3	3	24	10	+14	30	D W W W W
4 Schalke 04	15	9	1	5	31	21	+10	28	W L W D W
5 Werder Bremen	15	8	2	5	26	25	+1	26	L W L W W
6 Bayer Leverkusen	15	7	4	4	22	19	+3	25	W D W D W
7 Stuttgart	15	6	4	5	22	17	+5	22	D L W L D
8 Hannover 96	15	5	6	4	19	23	-4	21	D D L D L
9 Hertha BSC	15	4	7	4	22	23	-1	19	D D D L W
10 Hoffenheim	15	5	3	7	16	18	-2	18	L D L D L
11 Hamburger SV	15	4	5	6	20	26	-6	17	W D W D D
12 Köln	14	5	2	7	22	31	-9	17	D L L W L
13 Wolfsburg	15	5	2	8	21	30	-9	17	D L W L L
14 Mainz 05	14	4	4	6	21	27	-6	16	D W W L D
15 Nürnberg	15	4	3	8	14	26	-12	15	L W L L L
16 Kaiserslautern	15	3	5	7	11	19	-8	14	D L L D D
17 Freiburg	15	3	4	8	20	31	-11	13	D D D W L
18 Augsburg	15	2	5	8	13	27	-14	11	L W L L L

HOLLAND Eredivisie

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 AZ	15	11	2	2	31	13	+18	35	D L W W W
2 PSV	15	9	4	2	42	18	+24	31	L W W W D
3 Twente	15	8	6	1	39	15	+24	30	W D D W D
4 Ajax	15	7	6	2	41	23	+18	27	W W D L W
5 Feyenoord	15	8	3	4	29	18	+11	27	W W W L L
6 Heerenveen	15	6	7	2	33	23	+10	25	W D D W W
7 Vitesse	15	7	4	4	22	16	+6	25	W D L L W
8 Groningen	15	6	4	5	28	28	+0	22	D L W D W
9 Roda JC	15	7	0	8	22	36	-14	21	W W W L L
10 Heracles	15	5	5	5	27	22	+5	20	W L D L L
11 NAC Breda	15	5	3	7	22	26	-4	18	L D D W W
12 ADO Den Haag	15	5	3	7	20	27	-7	18	W D D L L
13 Utrecht	15	4	4	7	26	32	-6	16	L L D W L
14 RKC Waalwijk	15	4	3	8	14	26	-12	15	L L D D L
15 NEC	15	4	2	9	15	25	-10	14	D L L W W
16 De Graafschap	15	3	3	9	15	32	-17	12	L W L L L
17 Excelsior	15	1	5	9	9	29	-20	8	D L D D W
18 VVV	15	1	4	10	14	40	-26	7	L L L D L

SCOTLAND SPL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Rangers	17	13	3	1	32	8	+24	42	W L D W W
2 Celtic	17	12	2	3	35	14	+21	38	W W W W W
3 Motherwell	16	9	3	4	20	18	+2	30	D W L W D
4 St. Johnstone	16	7	5	4	20	13	+7	26	W W D L D
5 Heart of Midlo…	17	6	4	7	16	13	+3	22	L W L D L
6 Kilmarnock	17	5	7	5	23	25	-2	22	W W D L W
7 St. Mirren	17	5	5	7	15	21	-6	20	L L W D W
8 Dundee United	17	4	6	7	21	27	-6	18	L D W L W
9 Inverness CT	17	4	3	10	22	33	-11	15	W L L W L
10 Hibernian	16	3	5	8	16	26	-10	14	L D L D W
11 Dunfermline At…	17	3	5	9	20	36	-16	14	L D L L W
12 Aberdeen	16	3	4	9	17	23	-6	13	L D L L L

THE CHAMPIONSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Southampton	20	13	3	4	42	21	+21	42	L W L W W
2 West Ham United	20	12	4	4	36	17	+19	40	L W W W W
3 Cardiff City	20	10	7	3	34	22	+12	37	W W D W W
4 Middlesbrough	20	9	8	3	24	17	+7	35	W L D D W
5 Leeds United	20	10	4	6	35	28	+7	34	W W L W W
6 Hull City	20	10	3	7	23	22	+1	33	W W L L W
7 Brighton & Hov…	20	9	5	6	23	21	+2	32	W W W L W
8 Blackpool	20	8	6	6	31	25	+6	30	W L D D W
9 Barnsley	20	8	6	6	27	26	+1	30	W W W W L
10 Leicester City	20	8	5	7	27	22	+5	29	L W D W L
11 Burnley	20	8	3	9	31	30	+1	27	W W W L L
12 Reading	20	7	6	7	23	22	+1	27	L W W L W
13 Crystal Palace	20	7	6	7	20	20	+0	27	L D D L L
14 Birmingham City	18	7	5	6	24	21	+3	26	L L D W D
15 Derby County	20	7	4	9	24	30	-6	25	D L L L L
16 Peterborough U…	20	7	3	10	39	38	+1	24	L L D D W
17 Watford	20	6	6	8	21	29	-8	24	W D D W L
18 Portsmouth	19	6	5	8	22	22	+0	23	W D L W D
19 Millwall	20	5	7	8	23	24	-1	22	L W D L L
20 Bristol City	20	5	5	10	20	31	-11	20	L D W W W
21 Ipswich Town	19	6	2	11	26	39	-13	20	L L L L L
22 Nottingham Forest	20	6	2	12	18	35	-17	20	L L L W L
23 Doncaster Rovers	20	4	4	12	16	33	-17	16	W L D L W
24 Coventry City	20	2	7	11	17	31	-14	13	L L D L L

LEAGUE ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Charlton Athletic	19	14	4	1	42	14	+28	46	W W W W W
2 Sheffield Wedn…	19	12	3	4	34	24	+10	39	W W D W L
3 Huddersfield Town	19	10	8	1	37	17	+20	38	L W D W D
4 Milton Keynes Dons	19	10	6	3	39	21	+18	36	W W W W L
5 Sheffield United	19	10	5	4	33	22	+11	35	W W L D W
6 Notts County	19	9	4	6	34	27	+7	31	W L D L D
7 Brentford	19	8	5	6	22	20	+2	29	W L D W L
8 Carlisle United	19	8	5	6	25	28	-3	29	W L D D W
9 Stevenage	19	7	7	5	24	18	+6	28	D D W W W
10 Bury	19	8	3	8	25	27	-2	27	W W W L D
11 Tranmere Rovers	19	7	5	7	20	21	-1	26	L L D L W
12 Oldham Athletic	19	7	5	7	27	29	-2	26	D W L D D
13 Hartlepool United	19	7	5	7	24	26	-2	26	L L W D L
14 Preston North End	19	8	2	9	32	36	-4	26	W L L L L
15 Colchester United	19	5	8	6	26	30	-4	23	L L D W D
16 AFC Bournemouth	19	6	5	8	22	26	-4	23	D W W W D
17 Exeter City	19	5	5	9	20	30	-10	20	W D D D W
18 Leyton Orient	19	4	7	8	19	29	-10	19	L D D W D
19 Scunthorpe United	19	3	9	7	25	30	-5	18	L L L W D
20 Rochdale	19	4	5	10	22	35	-13	17	L W L L D
21 Walsall	19	3	7	9	18	25	-7	16	D L D L L
22 Yeovil Town	19	3	7	9	21	30	-9	16	W D D L D
23 Wycombe Wanderers	19	3	4	12	20	32	-12	13	L L D L L
24 Chesterfield	19	3	4	12	23	37	-14	13	L L D L D

LEAGUE TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Southend United	19	13	3	3	37	18	+19	42	D W W W W
2 Crawley Town	19	13	3	3	40	25	+15	42	W W D D W
3 Cheltenham Town	19	12	2	5	29	18	+11	38	W W W W L
4 Shrewsbury Town	19	11	4	4	32	19	+13	37	W W W D W
5 Burton Albion	19	10	5	4	32	26	+6	35	W W W L W
6 Swindon Town	19	10	3	6	30	16	+14	33	W D W D W
7 Gillingham	19	9	4	6	33	25	+8	31	D W W L L
8 Morecambe	19	8	6	5	35	21	+14	30	L L D W D
9 Oxford United	19	8	5	6	28	23	+5	29	L L L W W
10 Torquay United	19	7	7	5	31	26	+5	28	D W W W W
11 Rotherham United	19	7	6	6	34	33	+1	27	L W W D D
12 Port Vale	19	7	5	7	32	28	+4	26	D L L L W
13 AFC Wimbledon	19	7	5	7	29	35	-6	26	L D D D L
14 Macclesfield Town	19	7	4	8	21	20	+1	25	L D L L W
15 Crewe Alexandra	19	8	1	10	22	27	-5	25	W W L L W
16 Aldershot Town	19	7	2	10	23	24	-1	23	L L L W W
17 Accrington Stanley	19	5	8	6	20	23	-3	23	W D W D L
18 Bristol Rovers	19	6	4	9	24	32	-8	22	D L L W L
19 Barnet	19	5	4	10	24	38	-14	19	W W D L L
20 Hereford United	19	4	5	10	16	32	-16	17	L L D L W
21 Northampton Town	19	4	4	11	23	39	-16	16	L L L D L
22 Bradford City	19	3	6	10	20	28	-8	15	D L L D L
23 Dagenham & Red…	19	4	1	14	17	36	-19	13	L L L L L
24 Plymouth Argyle	19	3	3	13	18	38	-20	12	W L D L L

Greece Super League

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 AEK Athens	12	8	1	3	20	14	+6	25	W W W W L
2 Olympiakos Piraeus	11	7	3	1	25	12	+13	24	W W L D W
3 Panathinaikos	10	7	2	1	24	12	+12	23	L W D W W
4 Atromitos	11	5	5	1	12	10	+2	20	W L D W W
5 OFI	11	5	3	3	16	12	+4	18	W W L L W
6 Xanthi	12	5	2	5	18	14	+4	17	W W W W L
7 PAOK	12	4	4	4	15	12	+3	16	D D W L L
8 Panionios	12	3	4	5	11	14	-3	13	D W D L L
9 Ergotelis	12	3	3	6	12	17	-5	12	L W L D W
10 Panaitolikos	10	3	2	5	9	14	-5	11	L L L D W
11 PAS Giannina	10	2	4	4	11	14	-3	10	D L L L D
12 Aris	10	2	4	4	9	12	-3	10	W L W L L
13 Asteras Tripolis	10	2	3	5	5	12	-7	9	L W L W L
14 Kerkyra	10	1	3	6	7	15	-8	6	L D W L D
15 Levadiakos	4	1	2	1	3	3	+0	5	D W L D
16 Doxa Dramas	5	0	1	4	0	10	-10	1	L L L L D

France Ligue 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Montpellier	16	11	3	2	36	17	+19	36	W W W D W
2 PSG	16	10	3	3	29	17	+12	33	W L L D W
3 Lille	16	8	7	1	27	15	+12	31	W W D D D
4 Olympique Lyon	16	9	2	5	28	19	+9	29	W W L L W
5 Stade Rennes	16	8	4	4	27	21	+6	28	L W W D L
6 Toulouse	16	7	5	4	17	15	+2	26	L W D L W
7 Olympique Mars…	16	6	6	4	22	16	+6	24	W W L W W
8 Saint-Étienne	16	6	6	4	19	19	+0	24	D W W D L
9 Lorient	16	6	5	5	17	18	-1	23	L W L W L
10 Caen	16	5	4	7	23	25	-2	19	L L D W L
11 Evian TG	16	4	7	5	21	23	-2	19	W L W D W
12 Bordeaux	16	4	7	5	19	21	-2	19	W W L D W
13 Sochaux	16	4	6	6	21	30	-9	18	D L L W D
14 Dijon	16	5	3	8	17	29	-12	18	D W W L L
15 Brest	16	2	10	4	17	18	-1	16	D L W L W
16 Auxerre	16	3	6	7	22	26	-4	15	L L L W L
17 Valenciennes	16	3	5	8	16	19	-3	14	L L W D D
18 Nice	16	3	5	8	14	17	-3	14	W L L L D
19 Nancy	16	3	5	8	12	20	-8	14	L L W W L
20 Ajaccio	16	1	5	10	15	34	-19	8	L L D L L

Portugal Premeira Liga

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Porto	11	8	3	0	28	7	+21	27	W D W W W
2 Benfica	11	8	3	0	24	10	+14	27	W D W W W
3 Sporting CP	11	7	2	2	24	11	+13	23	L W W W W
4 Marítimo	11	6	4	1	18	13	+5	22	D W D W D
5 Sporting Braga	11	5	4	2	15	7	+8	19	L D D W L
6 Olhanense	11	3	5	3	11	11	+0	14	D D L W L
7 Gil Vicente	11	3	5	3	12	17	-5	14	W D D L D
8 Vitória Guimarães	11	4	1	6	17	14	+3	13	W W W L L
9 Beira-Mar	11	3	4	4	7	6	+1	13	W W L L D
10 Académica	11	4	1	6	14	16	-2	13	L L D L L
11 Vitória Setúbal	11	3	2	6	7	17	-10	11	L D L L W
12 Nacional	11	3	2	6	8	22	-14	11	D L W L W
13 Feirense	11	2	4	5	8	17	-9	10	W L L L D
14 União de Leiria	11	3	0	8	12	21	-9	9	L L W L W
15 Rio Ave	11	2	2	7	9	14	-5	8	L W L W L
16 Paços de Ferreira	11	2	2	7	11	22	-11	8	D L L W L

...Results...Results....Results.....Results....Results....Results...Results...Results...Results...Results...Results...

Wednesday, 7 December 2011

Npower Championship

Hull 2-1 Birmingham

Tuesday, 6 December 2011

Npower Championship

Barnsley 2-1 Crystal Palace

Johnstone's Paint Trophy

Barnet 0-0 Brentford (Barnet win 5-3 on penalties)

Oldham 2-0 Bradford

Preston 1-1 Chesterfield (Chesterfield win 4-2 on penalties)

Southend 1-2 Swindon

Scottish Third Division

Annan Athletic 0-3 Stranraer

Monday, 5 December 2011

Barclays Premier League

Fulham 1-0 Liverpool

Sunday, 4 December 2011

Barclays Premier League

Everton 0-1 Stoke

Wolverhampton 2-1 Sunderland

The FA Cup

AFC Totton 1-6 Bristol Rovers

Sutton Utd 0-2 Notts County

Npower Championship

Cardiff 1-0 Birmingham

Clydesdale Bank Premier League

Dundee Utd 0-1 Celtic

Saturday, 3 December 2011

Barclays Premier League

Aston Villa 0-1 Man Utd

Blackburn 4-2 Swansea

Man City 5-1 Norwich

Newcastle 0-3 Chelsea

QPR 1-1 West Brom

Tottenham 3-0 Bolton

Wigan 0-4 Arsenal

The FA Cup

Barnet 1-3 MK Dons

Bradford 3-1 AFC Wimbledon

Brentford 0-1 Wrexham

Charlton 2-0 Carlisle

Chelmsford 1-1 Macclesfield

Colchester 0-1 Swindon

Crawley Town 5-0 Redbridge

Dag & Red 1-1 Walsall

Gateshead 1-2 Tamworth

Leyton Orient 0-1 Gillingham

Luton 2-4 Cheltenham

Salisbury 0-0 Grimsby

Sheffield Utd 3-2 Torquay

Sheffield Wed 1-0 Aldershot

Shrewsbury 2-1 Rotherham

Southend 1-1 Oldham

Stourbridge 0-3 Stevenage

Npower Championship

Blackpool 1-0 Reading

Brighton 1-0 Nott'm Forest

Bristol City 0-1 Middlesbrough

Doncaster 1-0 Southampton

Hull 2-1 Leicester

Ipswich 1-2 Watford

Leeds 2-0 Millwall

Peterborough 3-4 Barnsley

Portsmouth 2-1 Coventry

West Ham 1-2 Burnley

Clydesdale Bank Premier League

Hearts 1-2 St Johnstone

Kilmarnock 2-0 Aberdeen

Rangers 2-1 Dunfermline

St Mirren 1-2 Inverness CT

Scottish First Division

Falkirk 1-0 Morton

Hamilton 1-6 Dundee

Partick Thistle 2-1 Livingston

Queen of South 4-1 Ayr

Ross County 4-2 Raith Rovers

Scottish Second Division

Albion 3-3 Cowdenbeath

Arbroath 1-1 Brechin

Dumbarton 1-1 Forfar

East Fife 1-3 Stenhousemuir

Stirling 1-4 Airdrie Utd

Scottish Third Division

Berwick 0-2 Clyde

East Stirling 1-0 Annan Athletic

Elgin 1-1 Stranraer

Montrose 1-1 Alloa

Queen's Park 1-1 Peterhead

Euro Results

ITALY

Catania 0 - 1 Cagliari

Bologna 1 - 0 Siena

Chievo 0 - 0 Atalanta

Fiorentina 3 - 0 Roma

Juventus 2 - 0 Cesena

Parma 0 - 0 Palermo

Lazio 3 - 0 Novara

SPAIN

Atlético Madrid 3 - 1 Rayo Vallecano

Real Sociedad 3 - 2 Málaga

Osasuna 2 - 1 Real Betis

Mallorca 1 - 1 Athletic Club

Granada 1 - 0 Real Zaragoza

Sevilla 3 - 0 Getafe

Granada 2 - 2 Mallorca

GERMANY

Bayer Leverkusen 2 - 0 Hoffenheim

Borussia M'gla 1 - 1 Borussia Dortmund

Wolfsburg 2 - 2Mainz 05

Kaiserslautern 1 - 1 Hertha BSC

Freiburg 1 - 1 Hannover 96

Bayern München 4 - 1 Werder Bremen

Stuttgart 2 - 2 Köln

Hamburger SV 2 - 0 Nürnberg

Schalke 04 3 - 1 Augsburg

GREECE

OFI 3 - 0 Asteras Tripolis

Atromitos 1 - 0 Ergotelis

Olympiakos Piraeus 2 - 0 Panaitolikos

AEK Athens 1 - 0 Kerkyra

Doxa Dramas 0 - 2 Xanthi

PAS Giannina 2 - 2 PAOK

Levadiakos 0 - 0 Panionios

Aris 3 - 1 Panathinaikos

Doxa Dramas 0 - 1 OFI

FRANCE

Ajaccio 2 - 3 Lille

Brest 2 - 2 Saint-Étienne

Dijon 0 - 0 Sochaux

Evian TG 2 - 1 Valenciennes

Montpellier 4 - 0 Lorient

Nice 2 - 0 Stade Rennes

Bordeaux 2 - 0 Nancy

PSG 3 - 2 Auxerre

Olympique Lyon 3 - 2 Toulouse

HOLLAND

Heracles 7 - 0 VVV

Feyenoord 2 - 0 PSV

Vitesse 4 - 0 RKC Waalwijk

Utrecht 2 - 6 Twente

Heerenveen 5 - 1 AZ

Excelsior 0 - 0 AZ

One Game At A Time

France

Saturday, 10 December 2011

Nancy v AC Ajaccio

Rennes v Brest

Sochaux v Paris SG

St Etienne v Caen

Toulouse v Evian Thonon Gaillar

Valenciennes v Montpellier

Marseille v Bordeaux

Sunday, 11 December 2011

Auxerre v Nice

Lille v Dijon

Lorient v Lyon

Germany

Friday, 9 December 2011

Hertha Berlin v Schalke 04

Saturday, 10 December 2011

Augsburg v Borussia M'gladbach

Cologne v SC Freiburg

Mainz v Hamburg

Nuremberg v TSG Hoffenheim

Werder Bremen v Wolfsburg

Hannover 96 v Bayer Leverkusen

Sunday, 11 December 2011

Borussia Dortmund v FC Kaiserslautern

VfB Stuttgart v Bayern Munich

Italy

Saturday, 10 December 2011

Lecce v Lazio

Siena v Genoa

Inter Milan v Fiorentina

Palermo v Cesena

Sunday, 11 December 2011

Atalanta v Catania

Bologna v AC Milan

Cagliari v Parma

Udinese v Chievo

Novara v Napoli

Monday, 12 December 2011

Roma v Juventus

Tuesday, 13 December 2011

Genoa v Inter Milan

England EPL

Saturday, 10 December 2011

Arsenal v Everton

Bolton v Aston Villa

Liverpool v QPR

Man Utd v Wolverhampton

Norwich v Newcastle

Swansea v Fulham

West Brom v Wigan

Sunday, 11 December 2011

Sunderland v Blackburn

Stoke v Tottenham

Monday, 12 December 2011

Chelsea v Man City

The Championship

Saturday, 10 December 2011

Southampton v Blackpool

Birmingham v Doncaster

Burnley v Portsmouth

Coventry v Hull

Derby v Bristol City

Leicester v Peterborough

Middlesbrough v Brighton

Millwall v Cardiff

Nott'm Forest v Crystal Palace

Reading v West Ham

Watford v Leeds

Barnsley v Ipswich

Scotland

Saturday, 10 December 2011

Hibernian v Rangers

Aberdeen v St Mirren

Celtic v Hearts

Dunfermline v Kilmarnock

Inverness CT v Dundee Utd

St Johnstone v Motherwell

Tuesday, 13 December 2011

St Johnstone v Aberdeen

Greece

Saturday, 10 December 2011

FC Xanthi v Levadiakos

PAOK Salonika v Atromitos

AEK Athens v Giannina

Sunday, 11 December 2011

Asteras Tripoli v Aris Salonika

Panetolikos v OFI Crete

Ergotelis v Doxa Dramas

Panionios v Panathinaikos

Kerkyra v Olympiakos

Wednesday, 14 December 2011

Levadiakos v Olympiakos

Spain

Saturday, 10 December 2011

Levante v Sevilla

Real Betis v Valencia

Real Madrid v Barcelona

Sunday, 11 December 2011

Rayo Vallecano v Sporting Gijon

Getafe v Granada

Villarreal v Real Sociedad

Malaga v Osasuna

Real Zaragoza v Mallorca

Athletic Bilbao v Racing Santander

Espanyol v Atletico Madrid

Holland

Friday, 9 December 2011

ADO Den Haag v Heracles

Saturday, 10 December 2011

FC Twente v NEC

AZ Alkmaar v De Graafschap

SC Excelsior Rotterdam v Heerenveen

PSV Eindhoven v NAC

Sunday, 11 December 2011

VVV Venlo v Roda JC

FC Utrecht v Feyenoord

RKC Waalwijk v Ajax

Vitesse v FC Groningen

Portugal

Friday, 9 Dec

Braga v Pacos

Saturday, 10 Dec

Beira Mar v FC Porto

Sporting v Nacional

Sunday, 11 Dec

Rio Ave v Gil Vicente

Vitoria v Feirense

Uniao Leiria v Guimaraes

Maritimo v Benfica

Monday, 12 Dec

Olhanense v Academica

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